

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

## Voluntary Mercury Air Emission Reduction Program (VMRP) EPA, State of Nevada Collaborate with Nevada's Gold Mines

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The state of Nevada ranks as the largest gold producer in the nation and the third-largest in the world. In 2002, Nevada's gold mines turned out 7.73 million ounces of gold - 80 percent of the total U.S. production - worth nearly \$2.4 billion. That same year, the state's four largest gold mining companies entered into an innovative partnership program with the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection and EPA Region 9 to significantly reduce mercury air emissions.

This Voluntary Mercury Air Emission Reduction Program (VMRP), set emission reduction goals at 33% by 2003 and 50% by 2005. The companies achieved a 80% reduction by the end of 2005. These are extraordinary reductions for a hazardous air pollutant in just three years. In this voluntary partnership approach the mines installed emission control equipment and instituted pollution prevention process changes well in advance of what would have been required through a regulatory rule making process. The environmental results are especially significant as these four mines were responsible for 90 percent of the mercury air emissions reported in the 1998 Toxic Release Inventory for the state of Nevada.



In what began as a voluntary program, the [Nevada Division of Environmental Protection](#) is now implementing a new regulatory program for the precious metals mining industry in Nevada, in an attempt to ensure that mercury air emissions for the entire precious metals industry are measured, monitored and controlled.