

Dr. Eibhlin Doyle

30th April 2008

Principal Geologist

Geological Survey of Ireland

Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources

Beggars Bush

Haddington Road

Dublin 4

Dear Dr. Doyle,

**Re: Integrated feasibility study for Avoca**

Thank you for your recent consultation on proposals for the integrated feasibility study for the remediation and management of the Avoca mining area, which most of the Celtic Copper Heritage INTERREG 111A project (hereafter CCH) Avoca partners were able to attend.

Whilst we welcome this comprehensive study for Avoca and understand that the site safety of the Avoca mining area is the primary concern, we wish to draw your attention to the following concerns which this study has raised.

As part of the stakeholder consultation process we note that little attention has been paid to mining heritage and opportunities that mining heritage can and should create for local regeneration. We are concerned that throughout your consultation process our CCH project has not been invited to participate and share the understanding of the importance of this heritage with you. We hope that you will be aware that our partnership has been brought together to promote the potential social and economic benefits of any proposals for the development of the mine sites, and includes representatives and scientists at a high level from Geological Survey of Ireland, Mining Heritage Trust of Ireland, Wicklow County Council (environmental, heritage and economic development sectors), Avoca Mines Heritage Trust, Vale of Avoca Development Association (representing local businesses in the Vale), Central Fisheries Board and Eastern Regional Fisheries Board, and the East Coast and Midlands Tourism Authority.

We regard the open pits and the spoil heaps of the Avoca mines as a significant asset in any future opportunity for education and economic development in the area. We are aware that they

represent perhaps the most significant opportunity to view our geological and mineralogical heritage in the whole of Ireland: that they are in fact a geological heritage of world significance. The core aim of CCH in bringing together such a degree of expertise in the field of geology and environmental sciences, as well as the exemplary enthusiasm of local people for their mining heritage, has been to focus on ways in which our heritage assets can be harnessed in future plans for the development of Avoca.

As well as CCH the mine sites themselves have been the focus of many serious academic studies and intellectual activities. They are therefore amongst our greatest assets. Whilst we concur that any real safety issues should be addressed we strongly urge your consideration of the damage that will be done by the removal of any aspect of this heritage from future availability for education, tourism and other purposes.

We look forward to hearing from you in due course.

We remain yours sincerely,

**CCH Avoca Steering Committee**

Dr Aidan Doyle (Co-ordinator)

Ms Josie Mahon (Eastern Regional Fisheries Board – lead partner)

Mr David Harrington (Wicklow County Council)