



NRC NEWS

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January 4, 2023

NRC Issues Final Environmental Study on Mine Waste Transfer at Church Rock Site in New Mexico

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has published its final [Environmental Impact Statement](#) for United Nuclear Corp.'s proposed disposal of mine waste from the Church Rock uranium mine in McKinley County, New Mexico.

United Nuclear has applied for a license amendment authorizing it to dispose of approximately 1 million cubic yards of uranium mine waste from the Northeast Church Rock mine site at the company's nearby uranium mill tailings site. The proposal is part of a longstanding U.S. Environmental Protection Agency effort to clean up the Church Rock mine site, which was contaminated during mine operations from 1967 to 1982.

The NRC's environmental review assesses the potential impacts of excavating the waste and transferring it to the mill site for disposal. The safety review, however, covers only the disposal aspect of the plan, as the mill tailings facility is licensed by the NRC. The NRC's regulatory jurisdiction does not extend to the mine itself. The staff's final [Safety Evaluation Report](#) was issued in December.

The NRC staff published a draft EIS for public comment in November 2020 and held three virtual public meetings. The public comment period was extended several times to a total of 353 days, ultimately closing on Nov. 1, 2021. The staff received approximately 100 unique comment submittals and identified approximately 1,300 unique comments. The final EIS includes a summary of the comments and the staff's responses.

Under NRC regulations, the staff must wait at least 30 days following publication of the final EIS before issuing its record of decision on the request. More information on the Church Rock proposal is available on the [NRC website](#).