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NRC AND UTAH CHOOSE DAMES & MOORE AS TRUSTEE  
FOR ATLAS URANIUM MILL TAILINGS PILE

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission, with concurrence from the State of Utah, has chosen Dames & Moore, an engineering firm with extensive uranium recovery and hazardous waste reclamation experience, as the trustee to continue cleanup of the Atlas company's uranium mill tailings site in Moab, Utah.

The NRC will regulate Dames & Moore's public health and safety activities during the remediation of the mill tailings site.

The mill tailings pile resulted from operations of a uranium mill at the Moab site from 1956 until 1984. The facility had been owned by Atlas since 1962. Uranium is no longer processed at the site, and the mill has been dismantled except for one building.

Under the terms of the trust agreement, the license for the site will be transferred from Atlas to Dames & Moore. Dames & Moore will then be responsible for ongoing remediation, using funds and other assets in the trust which were obtained as part of a reorganization for bankruptcy agreement filed by the Atlas Company in March. The trust will contain approximately \$7-8 million, including cash, assets and payments due from the Department of Energy for reclamation work already completed, unless further funds are appropriated by Congress.

NRC in May approved Atlas' reclamation plan to decommission the site, which involves re-grading the tailings to enhance drainage off the pile and installing an earth and rock cover system over the pile. The cover system is intended to minimize radon escape, infiltration of rain water into the tailings, and erosion caused by surface runoff from rain or flooding of the Colorado River.

NRC issued a draft environmental impact statement on the site in January 1996 and held public meetings in April 1994, February 1996, and September 1998 to discuss the Atlas company's proposal. A final environmental impact statement was issued in March.

The latest action to transfer the license for the site will release the Atlas Corporation from any future liability or responsibility for the cleanup of the Moab site, and avoid lengthy and expensive litigation. The NRC will oversee administration of the trust fund.

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