

United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission
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No. 99-238
November 5, 1999

NRC AND UTAH CHOOSE PRICEWATERHOUSECOOPERS AS TRUSTEE
FOR ATLAS URANIUM MILL TAILINGS PILE

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission, with concurrence from the State of Utah, has chosen PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP (PWC), a professional services organization, as the trustee to continue cleanup of the Atlas company's uranium mill tailings site in Moab, Utah. The NRC will regulate PWC'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 PWC. PWC will then be responsible for ongoing remediation, using funds and other assets in the trust which were obtained as part of a settlement agreement and reorganization resulting from a bankruptcy petition filed by the Atlas Company. The trust is expected to contain approximately \$7-8 million, including cash, assets and payments due from the Department of Energy for reclamation work already completed.

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 trust agreement calls for the NRC to select a trustee with the concurrence of the State of Utah. NRC originally, in September, selected Dames & Moore as trustee, with the concurrence of Utah. However, Dames & Moore's decision in October not to accept the trusteeship necessitated this second selection of a trustee.

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