



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001
February 20, 1997

Mr. Richard Sena, Acting Director
Environmental Restoration Division
Uranium Mill Tailings Remedial Action
Project
U.S. Department of Energy
2155 Louisiana NE, Suite 4000
Albuquerque, NM 87110

SUBJECT: LONG-TERM SURVEILLANCE PLAN FOR THE MEXICAN HAT URANIUM MILL
TAILINGS REMEDIAL ACTION PROJECT SITE

Dear Mr. Sena:

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has reviewed the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE's) Long-Term Surveillance Plan (LTSP), dated February 1996 for the Mexican Hat, Utah, Uranium Mill Tailings Remedial Action Project disposal site. Based on this review, we conclude that additional information is needed regarding the monitoring of seeps in the site area.

Staff review indicates that DOE needs to clarify its proposed course of action regarding the seepage monitoring that will be performed at the site. For example, on page 5-8 of the LTSP, DOE indicates that "In keeping with the best management practices and a request from the Navajo Nation, selected seeps will be monitored periodically to observe changes in flow rates and water quality." The staff considers that more specific information should be provided in the LTSP to show the extent and frequency of the monitoring and any actions or remedial measures that will be taken if problems are identified. This specific information should indicate the constituents and the specific seep locations that will be monitored, the measurements that will be taken, and the remedial measures that will be instituted if a problem is identified.

Based on the requests of the Navajo Nation and the commitments made by DOE in the Remedial Action Plan for the Mexican Hat site, the staff recommends that a program be developed to: (1) monitor constituents that are indicative of tailings seepage; (2) monitor flow rates and collect samples from all seeps identified in Figure 5.2, when seepage is present; and (3) take actions if a problem is found. Revisions to the LTSP should be made to achieve these minimum goals.

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R. Sena

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If you have any questions, please contact the NRC Project Manager, Harold Lefevre, at (301) 415-6678.

Sincerely,

(Original signed by Daniel M. Gillen for)

Joseph J. Holonich, Chief
Uranium Recovery Branch
Division of Waste Management
Office of Nuclear Material Safety
and Safeguards

Enclosure: As stated

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