



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20555

2/25

JUL 2 1990

Docket No. 70-36
License No. SNM-33

Combustion Engineering, Inc.
ATTN: Mr. James A. Rode, Plant Manager
Hematite Fuel Manufacturing
P.O. Box 107
Hematite, MO 63047

Gentlemen:

In your May 14, 1990, letter to Mr. Donald Sreniawski of our Region III office, you requested permission to fill the excavated area of the Building 253 construction site and resume construction of the building. According to your survey results, one small area still exceeds the limit of 30 pci/gm that was set for the decontamination limit. Your letter states that excavation has been completed to a depth 6 feet below the planned floor level and that as a result, two column footings are in jeopardy. The letter further states that excavation is impeded by the fact that the area is 1 to 2 feet below the water table. Additionally, the adjacent Building 240 subfloor is still contaminated, as is the ground water (5.04E-6 microcuries/ml). You have stated that you feel further efforts at decontamination are futile and therefore request permission to fill the excavated area and resume construction. In a subsequent conversation between Mr. Sreniawski and Mr. James Rode, Mr. Rode stated that records of the extent of the uranium contamination in the soil below the Building 253 floor will be maintained as required by 10 CFR Part 70.25(g), as the area will be included as part of the eventual decommissioning of the entire facility.

On May 31, 1990, Oak Ridge Associated Universities (ORAU) conducted an independent survey and submitted the results to the NRC on June 25, 1990 (copy enclosed). The results agree with Combustion Engineering's (CE) finding that some contamination still exists. ORAU's report should also be maintained as part of your decommissioning records.

After reviewing the request, the staff feels, that because of the endangerment to the building structures and the fact that the area is not being released for unrestricted use, CE may go ahead and backfill the area and proceed with construction of the building. This is done with the understanding that at the end of plant life further decontamination may be necessary.

The staff is concerned about the existing ground water contamination under the buildings. We believe that it is appropriate for you to develop a ground water monitoring program to determine the extent of the contamination and then provide monitoring of the area on a continuing basis. You should submit within 60 days, for our review, a plan for the ground water monitoring and a schedule for implementation. This may be submitted as a supplement or addenda to the ground water monitoring plan submitted by letter dated April 11, 1990.

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By letter dated April 7, 1989, CE requested that the spent limestone piles be released for unrestricted use as fill material. While our ongoing evaluation does not permit us to authorize the release of the limestone for unrestricted use at this time, we are willing to allow CE to use the limestone in piles A and C as fill material in the excavated area of Building 253. Although there is still some disparity between ORAU's (copy enclosed) and CE's results as to the uranium concentration levels in the limestone, the concentration in these two piles of limestone is still below the concentration level remaining in the soil. As the fill material may become contaminated from the ground water and surrounding soil, the fill may have to be removed upon facility decommissioning. Since the average uranium concentration in the limestone is below the 30 pci/gm limit established for soil decontamination, no additional environmental degradation would be expected from using the limestone from piles A and C. Therefore, the limestone from piles A and C may be used as fill material. The current concentration data from the limestone piles used as fill for the building should also be included in your decommissioning file. In a conversation on June 6, 1990, between Mr. Harold Eskridge of your staff and Ms. Merri Horn of my staff, Mr. Eskridge agreed to make these records part of the file required by 10 CFR 70.25(g).

Sincerely,

~~Original Signed By:~~

Charles J. Haughney, Chief
Fuel Cycle Safety Branch
Division of Industrial and
Medical Nuclear Safety, NMSS

Enclosure:

- 1. ORAU letter dtd June 25, 1990
- 2. ORAU letter dtd Sept. 25, 1989

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