

January 23, 2008

Ms. Elizabeth Southerland, Director
Division of Assessment and Remediation
Office of Superfund Remediation
and Technology Innovation
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
M.S. 5204P
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20460

SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING THE
DECOMMISSIONING OF THE CABOT PERFORMANCE MATERIALS SITE IN
READING, PENNSYLVANIA

Dear Ms. Southerland:

I would like to thank the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for providing its views to the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) on the decommissioning of the Cabot Performance Materials site in Reading, Pennsylvania, which were in a letter from Mr. Michael Cook, former Director of EPA's Office of Superfund Remediation and Technology Innovation, to Mr. Jack Strosnider, former Director of NRC's Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards, dated May 10, 2006. On March 10, 2006, the NRC consulted with EPA because the effective average soil concentration for thorium-232 in the proposed decommissioning plan (DP) for the Cabot site exceeded the soil values for thorium-232 in Table 1 of the 2002 "Memorandum of Understanding between NRC and EPA on Consultation and Finality on Decommissioning and Decontamination of Contaminated Sites."

In the letter, Mr. Cook stated that: "In EPA's view, NRC should select and implement institutional controls to ensure limited access to the portion of the site with thorium contamination in excess of the Table 1 value." The NRC staff reviewed the licensee's proposed DP and has concluded that the proposed cleanup levels for soil in the DP do not pose an adverse impact to public health and safety, or the environment. The NRC staff also reviewed the radiological condition of the site, as detailed in the characterization reports, inspection reports, and independent assessments, and concluded that the site meets the criteria for unrestricted release in Title 10 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 20, Subpart E. Thus, NRC will not require the selection and implementation of institutional controls.

However, while not required by NRC regulations, State and local officials have developed an agreement for the long-term control of the Cabot site. The land is owned by the city of Reading, who is not an NRC licensee. According to the terms of the agreement, the site is to be left in the condition existing at the time of license termination. No excavation, grading, construction, development, or other improvement or disturbance at the site will be permitted. The agreement also includes deed restrictions and inspections at 5-year intervals by the city of Reading.

If you have any questions regarding this letter or the decommissioning activities at the Cabot Performance Materials site, please contact Dr. Keith I. McConnell, Deputy Director, Decommissioning and Uranium Recovery Licensing Directorate, at 301-415-7295.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Larry W. Camper, Director
Division of Waste Management
and Environmental Protection
Office of Federal and State Materials
and Environmental Management Programs

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Sincerely,

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Larry W. Camper, Director
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