February 13, 2009

Mr. Dale Old Horn
Crow Tribal Cultural Resources
P.O. Box 159
Crow Agency, MT 59022

SUBJECT: INITIATION OF SECTION 106 PROCESS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW OF COGEMA MINING INC.'S LICENSE RENEWAL REQUEST FOR THE IRIGARY AND CHRISTENSEN RANCH PROJECTS (DOCKET 040-08502)

Dear Mr. Old Horn:

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) has received an application from COGEMA Mining, Inc. (COGEMA) to renew Source Material License SUA-1341 to continue *in-situ* uranium recovery activities at the Irigary/Christensen Ranch facilities located in Campbell and Johnson Counties, WY. COGEMA is requesting that its license be renewed for a 10-year period. COGEMA's license was last renewed for a 10-year period on June 30, 1998. In 2001, the NRC approved COGEMA's license amendment request to change site operations from uranium production to well field restoration and site decommissioning. In 2008, the NRC approved COGEMA's license amendment request to restart uranium production activities.

The Irigary and Christensen Ranch permit areas contain approximately 15,000 acres located within the southern portion of the Powder River Basin and west of North Butte of the Pumpkin Buttes. COGEMA expects that the total surface area to be disturbed by existing and future operations is 930 acres within the existing permit area. Land disturbance may consist of well field installation of piping, header houses, production and injection wells as well as well field decommissioning and restoration.

As established in Title 10 *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 51 (10 CFR 51), the NRC regulation that implements the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended, the agency is preparing an environmental assessment (EA) for the proposed action. In accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, the EA will include an analysis of potential impacts to historic and cultural resources. To support the environmental review, the NRC is requesting information from the Crow Tribal Historic Preservation Officer to facilitate the identification of historic and cultural resources that may be affected by continued operation of the Irigary and Christensen Ranch Uranium Recovery Projects. Any information you provide will be used to enhance the scope and quality of our review in accordance with 10 CFR 51 and 36 CFR 800. After reviewing all the information collected, the NRC will prepare a draft EA and will provide your office an opportunity to comment.

The COGEMA Mining, Inc. Irigary and Christensen Ranch Projects license renewal application is publicly available in the NRC Public Document Room located at One White Flint North, 11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland 20852, or from the NRC's Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS). The ADAMS Public Electronic Reading Room is accessible at http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html. The accession number for the application package is ML081850689.

Please submit any comments/information that you may have regarding this environmental review within 30 days of the receipt of this letter to the NRC, Attn: Ms. Andrea Kock, Mail Stop T-8F05, Washington, DC 20555. If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Johari Moore of my staff by telephone at 301-415-7694 or by email at Johari.Moore@nrc.gov. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Andrea L. Kock, Chief
Environmental Review Branch
Environmental Protection
and Performance Assessment Directorate
Division of Waste Management
and Environmental Protection
Office of Federal and State Materials
and Environmental Management Programs

Docket No.: 040-08502
License No.: SUA-1341

Enclosure: Figure 2.1
Irigaray and Christensen Ranch
Area General Location Map

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Andrea L. Kock, Chief
Environmental Review Branch
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