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UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION VIII

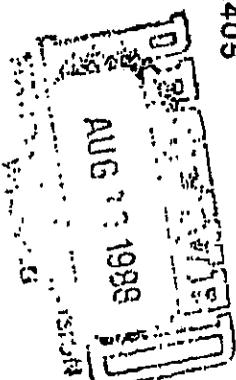
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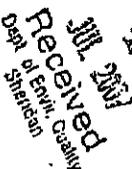
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Ref: 8WM-DW

Mr. William L. Garland
Administrator, Water Quality Division
Department of Environmental Quality
122 West 25th Street
Herschler Building
4th Floor West
Cheyenne, Wyoming 82008



RE: Ground Water Classification
for Christensen Ranch
In-Situ Uranium Project
(WDEQ Permit to Mine #478)



Dear Bill:

My staff has reviewed the information submitted by Malapa Resources for the Christensen Ranch Amendment, Permit to Mine #478. This included the general ground water classification memos from the Water Quality Division, the draft Environmental Assessment, and the relevant portions of the amendment application. The information contained in the submittal does not specifically delineate the area to be designated as a Class V ground water (equivalent to an aquifer exemption for the project which has four mining phases over a twenty-five (25) year period). The applicant has, however, provided some specifics on phase one of the project, which outline the approximate well field area (Figure 3.2, Amendment to Mine) and a typical production unit well pattern layout (Figure 3.2, Amendment to Mine). Our review raised no concerns with the proposed phase one layout or monitoring. There are no existing sources of drinking water within the area of review. The closest existing sources of drinking water are in Section 8, T44N, R76W. The Region concurs with designation of the ground water associated with the Phase I project as generally outlined on Figure 3.2, Amendment to Mine, if the classification is restricted to the aquifer inside of the ring of ore zone monitoring wells, with the understanding that minor changes will be made when the applicant drills out the well field.

The review of the general information regarding the remaining three phases of the project raised no major issues, except for the non-specific nature of the ground water classification made by the Water Quality Division (May 5, 1988 memo from Bob Lucht). The memo refers to designating the K Sand ore zone as a Class V, but does not reference a map as was the case in the classification action for the Everest Highland

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project. Additionally, there is no reference to the fact that the Water Division planned further review of this action when more information became available as the ore zone is developed. EPA believes that the general classification action to phases 2, 3, and 4 should be referenced to the approximate representation of the ore zone shown in the cross section locations map (Figure D5.6). This designation should indicate that final classification will be made when the ore body is finally delineated and ore zone monitor well locations are selected. The region would like to participate in the review of the specific data on phases 2-4 when it becomes available.

If you have any questions on our comments, please contact Mike Strieby at (303) 293-1415 or Paul Osborne (303) 293-1418.

Sincerely,



Max H. Dodson
 Director
 Water Management Division



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 Received
 Dept. of Env't Quality
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