

January 4, 2012

Dr. Benjamin Tuggle, Regional Director
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
P.O. Box 1306
Albuquerque, NM 87103-1306

SUBJECT: NOTIFICATION OF THE ISSUANCE OF AND REQUEST FOR COMMENTS ON
THE DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR THE PROPOSED
INTERNATIONAL ISOTOPES FLUORINE PRODUCTS FACILITY IN LEA
COUNTY, NEW MEXICO

Dear Dr. Tuggle:

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) staff is reviewing an application submitted by International Isotopes Fluorine Products, Inc. for a license to construct, operate, and decommission a proposed uranium processing facility. The facility is proposed to be located within a 640-acre section in Lea County near Hobbs, New Mexico, of which approximately 40 acres would be developed. The proposed facility, if licensed, would deconvert depleted uranium hexafluoride into uranium oxide compounds for long-term disposal.

As part of the review of the application, the NRC has prepared a draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) (NUREG-2113). The draft EIS includes an analysis of relevant environmental issues and documents the NRC staff's preliminary determination regarding the environmental impacts from the construction, operation, and decommissioning of the proposed facility. The NRC staff's preliminary determination is that potential impacts to ecological resources from construction, operation, and decommissioning of the proposed facility will be small.

The NRC staff is enclosing on a compact disc (CD) the draft EIS for your review and comment. Please provide any information or comments on the enclosed draft EIS that you consider appropriate during the comment period, which ends on February 27, 2012. Comments can be submitted either by mail to Cindy Bladey, Chief, Rules, Announcements, and Directives Branch, Division of Administrative Services, Office of Administration, Mailstop TWB-05-B01M, Washington, DC 20555-0001, or by e-mail to INIS_EIS.Resource@nrc.gov.

The NRC staff plans to hold a public meeting to discuss the contents of the draft EIS on Thursday, February 2, 2012 at the Lea County Event Center, 5101 Lovington Highway in Hobbs, New Mexico. The meeting will convene at 5:30 p.m. and will continue until 8:30 p.m. The meeting will be transcribed and will include the following agenda items: (1) a brief presentation of NRC's roles and responsibilities and the licensing process; (2) a presentation summarizing the contents of the draft EIS; and (3) an opportunity for interested government agencies, Tribal governments, organizations, and individuals to provide comments on the draft EIS. Additionally, the NRC staff will host informal discussions in an open house forum 1 hour before the start of the meeting, during which members of the public may meet and talk with NRC staff members. You and other staff from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service are invited to attend.

B.Tuggle

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If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Mr. Asimios Malliakos, Project Manager, by phone at 301-415-6458, or by e-mail at Asimios.Mallikos@nrc.gov.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Kevin Hsueh, 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.: 40-9086

Enclosure: Draft EIS (CD Copy)

B. Tuggle

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