

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[NRC-2011-0148]

**Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for the Ross *In-Situ* Uranium Recovery
Project in Crook County, Wyoming**

AGENCY: Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

ACTION: Draft supplemental environmental impact statement; request for comment.

SUMMARY: By letter dated January 4, 2011, Strata Energy, Inc., (Strata) submitted an application to the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) for a new source materials license for the proposed Ross *In-Situ* Uranium Recovery (ISR) Project (Ross Project) proposed to be located in Crook County, Wyoming. The NRC is issuing for public comment a Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (Draft SEIS) for the Ross Project. The Draft SEIS is Supplement 5 to NUREG-1910, "Generic Environmental Impact Statement for *In-Situ* Leach Uranium Milling Facilities."

DATES: Submit comments by **[INSERT DATE: 45 DAYS FROM DATE OF PUBLICATION]**. Comments received after this date will be considered if it is practical to do so, but the NRC is able to assure consideration only for comments received on or before this date.

ADDRESSES: You may access information and comment submissions related to this document, which the NRC possesses and is publically available, by searching on <http://www.regulations.gov> under Docket ID **NRC-2011-0148**. You may submit comments by any of the following methods:

- **Federal Rulemaking Web site:** Go to <http://www.regulations.gov> and search for Docket ID **NRC-2011-0148**. Address questions about NRC dockets to Carol Gallagher; telephone: 301-492-3668; e-mail: Carol.Gallagher@nrc.gov.

- **Mail comments to:** Cindy Bladey, Chief, Rules, Announcements, and Directives Branch, Office of Administration, Mail Stop: TWB-05-B01M, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001.

- **Fax comments to:** RADB at 301-492-3446.

For additional direction on accessing information and submitting comments, see “Accessing Information and Submitting Comments” in the SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION section of this document.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Johari Moore, Project Manager, Office of Federal and State Materials and Environmental Management Programs, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington DC, 20555-0001; telephone: 301-415-7694; e-mail: Johari.Moore@nrc.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Accessing Information and Submitting Comments

A. Accessing Information

Please refer to Docket ID **NRC-2011-0148** when contacting the NRC about the availability of information regarding this document. You may access information related to this document, which the NRC possesses and is publicly available by any of the following methods:

- **Federal Rulemaking Web site:** Go to <http://www.regulations.gov> and search for Docket ID **NRC-2011-0148**.

- **NRC's Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS):** You may access publicly available documents associated with the Ross Project through the NRC Library at <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html>. To begin the search, select "ADAMS Public Documents" and then select "Begin Web-based ADAMS Search." For problems with ADAMS, please contact the NRC's Public Document Room (PDR) reference staff at 1-800-397-4209, 301-415-4737, or by e-mail to pdr.resource@nrc.gov. The Draft SEIS (NUREG-1910, Supplement 5) is available in ADAMS under Accession Number ML13078A036. NUREG-1910 is available in ADAMS under Accession Numbers ML091480244 (Volume 1) and ML091480188 (Volume 2).

- **NRC's PDR:** You may examine and purchase copies of public documents at the NRC's PDR, Room O1-F21, One White Flint North, 11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland 20852.

B. Submitting Comments

Please include Docket ID **NRC-2011-0148** in the subject line of your comment submission, in order to ensure that the NRC is able to make your comment submission available to the public in this docket.

The NRC cautions you not to include identifying or contact information that you do not want to be publicly disclosed in your comment submission. The NRC will post all comment

submissions at <http://www.regulations.gov> as well as enter the comment submissions into ADAMS. The NRC does not routinely edit comment submissions to remove identifying or contact information.

If you are requesting or aggregating comments from other persons for submission to the NRC, then you should inform those persons not to include identifying or contact information that they do not want to be publicly disclosed in their comment submission. Your request should state that the NRC does not routinely edit comment submissions to remove such information before making the comment submissions available to the public or entering the comment submissions into ADAMS.

II. Further Information

Under the NRC's environmental protection regulations in part 51 of Title 10 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (10 CFR), which implement the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or supplement to an EIS (SEIS) is required for issuance of a license to possess and use source material for uranium milling (see 10 CFR 51.20(b)(8)).

In May 2009, the NRC staff issued NUREG-1910, "Generic Environmental Impact Statement for *In-Situ* Leach Uranium Milling Facilities" (herein referred to as the GEIS). In the GEIS, the NRC assessed the potential environmental impacts from construction, operation, aquifer restoration, and decommissioning of an in situ leach uranium milling facility (also known as an ISR facility) located in four specific geographic regions of the western United States. The proposed Ross Project is located within the Nebraska-South Dakota-Wyoming Uranium Milling Region identified in the GEIS. The Draft SEIS supplements the GEIS and incorporates by

reference relevant portions from the GEIS, and uses site-specific information from Strata's license application and independent sources to fulfill the requirements in 10 CFR 51.20(b)(8).

The Draft SEIS for the proposed Ross Project may also be accessed on the internet at <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/nuregs/staff/> by selecting "NUREG-1910" and then "Supplement 5," or on the NRC's Ross Project webpage at <http://www.nrc.gov/materials/uranium-recovery/license-apps/ross.html>. Additionally, a copy of the Draft SEIS will be available at the following public libraries:

Crook County Library
Hulett Branch
401 Sager Street
Hulett, WY 82720

Crook County Library
Moorcroft Branch
105 E Converse
Moorcroft, WY 82721

The Draft SEIS was prepared in response to an application submitted by Strata by letter dated January 4, 2011. The applicant proposes the construction, operation, aquifer restoration, and decommissioning of an ISR facility.

The Draft SEIS was prepared by the NRC and its contractor, Attenuation Environmental Company, in cooperation with the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The NRC has prepared this Draft SEIS in compliance with NEPA and the NRC's regulations for implementing NEPA (10 CFR Part 51).

The proposed Ross Project will be located approximately 34.6 kilometers (km) (21.5 miles [mi]) north of the town of Moorcroft, Wyoming and would encompass approximately 697 hectares (ha) (1,721 acres [ac]).

The Draft SEIS is being issued as part of the NRC's process to decide whether to issue a license to Strata pursuant to 10 CFR Part 40. In the Draft SEIS, the NRC staff has assessed the potential environmental impacts from the construction, operation, aquifer restoration, and decommissioning of the proposed Ross Project. The NRC staff assessed the impacts of the proposed action and its alternatives on land use; historical and cultural resources; visual and scenic resources; climatology, meteorology and air quality; geology, minerals and soils; water resources; ecological resources; socioeconomics; environmental justice; noise; traffic and transportation; public and occupational health and safety; and waste management. Additionally, the Draft SEIS analyzes and compares the benefits and costs of the proposed action.

The NRC staff evaluated site-specific data and information on the Ross Project to determine if Strata's proposed activities and the site characteristics were consistent with those evaluated in the GEIS. NRC then determined which relevant sections of, and impact conclusions in, the GEIS could be incorporated by reference. The NRC staff also determined if additional data or analysis was needed to assess the potential environmental impacts for a specific environmental resource area. The NRC documented its assessments and conclusions in the Draft SEIS.

In addition to the action proposed by Strata, the NRC staff addressed the no-action alternative, as well as alternative location for proposed facility. All the alternatives were

analyzed in detail. The no-action alternative serves as a baseline for comparing the potential environmental impacts of the proposed action.

After weighing the impacts of the proposed action and comparing the alternatives, the NRC staff, in accordance with 10 CFR 51.71(f), sets forth its preliminary recommendation regarding the proposed action. Unless safety issues mandate otherwise, the NRC staff preliminarily recommends that the proposed action be approved (*i.e.*, the NRC should issue a source material license for the proposed Ross Project).

The Draft SEIS is being issued for public comment. The public comment period on the Draft SEIS begins with publication of this notice and continues until **[INSERT DATE: 45 DAYS FROM DATE OF PUBLICATION]**. Written comments should be submitted as described in the ADDRESSES section of this document. The NRC will consider comments received or postmarked after that date to the extent practical.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 20th day of March 2013.

For the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

/RA/

Aby Mohseni, Deputy Director
Environmental Protection and
Performance Assessment Directorate
Division of Waste Management
and Environmental Protection
Office of Federal and State Materials
and Environmental Management Programs.