



UNITED STATES

ML16113A354

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

REGION IV

URANIUM RECOVERY FIELD OFFICE
BOX 25325
DENVER, COLORADO 80225

JUN 16 1993

Docket No. 40-8905

Quivira Mining Company
ATTN: Bill Ferdinand
6305 Waterford Blvd., Suite 325
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73118

Dear Mr. Ferdinand:

We are in receipt of your letter dated April 26, 1993, regarding NRC Inspection Report 40-8905/93-01 which was issued on March 16, 1993. We have reviewed the comments provided in your letter and wish to clarify some of the points raised.

Your Comment No. 1 concerned the failure of site personnel to close mill corrective orders (MCO) issued by the radiation safety staff in a timely manner. As you note in your letter, MCO 92-016 concerning yellowcake contamination in the leach area of the mill was issued by the radiation safety staff on December 9, 1992, and was still open at the time of the inspection which was conducted on February 23-24, 1993. Although several attempts to decontaminate the area had been made, the radiation safety staff felt that the area should be further decontaminated. The inspectors felt that efforts to decontaminate the area had not been made in a timely manner.

Your Comment No. 2 concerned two ALARA items identified during the inspection regarding the control of radioactive materials. The first deficiency involved a sink used to return yellowcake process solutions extracted from the circuit back into the circuit. The inspector noted that the configuration of the sink does not allow adequate drainage of solutions, and there was no way to effectively wash the sink. This has led to a visible buildup of yellowcake contamination in the sink. The second deficiency concerned the open discharge of water from IX columns in the IX building into a covered concrete channel for conveyance outside the building. The inspector noted that the open discharge could serve to aerate the water and result in a release of radon gas into the building environment. These two deficiencies were discussed in the report as examples of two situations which could be improved in keeping with the ALARA principle.

Your Comment No. 3 concerns the two weaknesses observed in the in-plant air sampling program. The first item involves the failure to calibrate the "manometer" used to calibrate air sampling pumps. During the inspection, the inspector was shown a differential pressure gauge when the subject of calibration of air sampling pumps was discussed, although site personnel did

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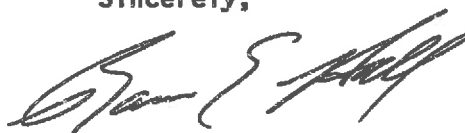
JUN 16 1993

state that a manometer was used for calibration. The inspector assumed that the gauge was being used for calibration, and that the term "manometer" was incorrectly used to describe a gauge whose function is to measure differential pressure. We will evaluate your response during a subsequent inspection.

The second deficiency concerned the procedure used to calibrate the air sampling pumps. The procedure involves punching holes in the sample filter during pump calibration to create different flow conditions. Your letter states that this procedure is similar to the procedure recommended by the pump manufacturer, except that the recommended procedure uses a series of restricting plates, each with a different number of holes, to create different flow conditions. We would expect that the configuration and size of the holes on the restricting plates were designed to create specific, exact flow conditions. The procedure in use at the site would not seem to provide comparable control of flow conditions. The manufacturer's literature was not made available to the inspector during the inspection. We ask that this information be available for review during the next inspection.

Should you have any questions concerning this letter, we would be pleased to discuss them with you.

Sincerely,



Ramon E. Hall
Director

cc:

A. Gebeau, Quivira
B. Garcia, RCPD, NM
E. Montoya, NMED

JUN 16 1993

bcc:
*Docket File No. 40-8905
*PDR
*Suspense File
*URFO r/f
*RSTS Operator
*NMIS
*MIS System
*PJGarcia
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* Copy of licensee's response attached.

PM:URFO <i>PJG</i>	DD:URFO <i>TA</i>	D:URFO:RIV		
PJGarcia/lv	EFHawkins	REHall		
06/10/93	06/10/93	06/15/93		

bcc:

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PDR/DCS
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LLUR Branch, LLWM, 5E2
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PM:URFO	DD:URFO	D:URFO:RIV		
PJGarcia/lv*	EFHawkins*	REHall*		
06/ /93	06/ /93	06/ /93		

*concurred previously