



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

December 14, 2018

Mr. Santiago Rodriguez
Bureau Chief
Radiation Control Bureau
New Mexico Environment Department
P.O. Box 5469
Santa Fe, NM 87502-5469

SUBJECT: U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION REQUEST FOR
INFORMATION REGARDING THE PROPOSED PARTIAL SITE RELEASE
FOR THE RIO ALGOM MINING LLC LICENSE AMENDMENT REQUEST
(DOCKET NUMBER: 40-8905)

Dear Mr. Rodriguez:

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) received, by letter dated November 8, 2017, an application from Rio Algom Mining LLC (RAML) to amend Source Materials License SUA-1473 and release the Section 4 Ponds of the Ambrosia Lake Mill Facility for unconditional use. The Ambrosia Lake site is in the Ambrosia Lake mining district of New Mexico, 25 miles north of Grants, New Mexico (site layout enclosed). If this renewal is approved, the Section 4 Ponds will be removed from RAML's license for unconditional use.

Currently the licensee is conducting reclamation activities in preparation for license termination. Reclamation activities include consolidation and stabilization of evaporation/disposal ponds, groundwater remediation, construction of channels and diversion berms to control surface water flow, and disposal of contaminated byproduct materials, crushed yellowcake drums and contaminated waste materials from past milling operations in tailings impoundments. The NRC's regulations in the Title 10 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (10 CFR) Part 40, Appendix A "Criteria Relating to the Operation of Uranium Mills and the Disposition of Tailings or Wastes Produced by the Extraction or Concentration of Source Material From Ores Processed Primarily for their Source Material Content," govern the concentrations of radionuclides allowed in the byproduct materials. A partial site release indicates that the Section 4 ponds would be removed from the RAML license. Unconditional use indicates that that the site meets the radium benchmark dose criteria of 10 CFR 40, Appendix A, Criterion 6(6) and that the land can be used without restriction.

As established in 10 CFR Part 51, "Environmental Protection Regulations for Domestic Licensing and Related Regulatory Functions," the NRC regulation that implements the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), as amended, the NRC staff is preparing an environmental assessment (EA) for the proposed action. The EA will include an analysis of potential impacts to the local environmental resource areas. In support of the environmental review, the NRC respectfully requests information about potential impacts to environmental resources from the New Mexico Environment Department for the proposed license amendment.

The RAML license amendment 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 ADAMS number for the application package is ML17340A482.

Please provide any comments and/or information you may have regarding this environmental review within 30-days of receipt of this letter to the: U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, ATTN: Ms. Cinthya I. Román, Chief, 11555 Rockville Pike, Mail Stop: T-4B16, Rockville, Maryland 20852. If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Monika Coflin of my staff by telephone at 301-415-5932 or via e-mail at Monika.Coflin@nrc.gov.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Cinthya I. Román, Chief
Environmental Review Branch
Division of Fuel Cycle Safety, Safeguards,
and Environmental Review
Office of Nuclear Material Safety
and Safeguards

Docket No. 40-8905
License No. SUA-1473

Enclosure:
Ambrosia Lake Section 4 Ponds Site Layout

cc: Mr. Michael Ortiz, Program Manager

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DATED: December 14, 2018

DISTRIBUTION:
J. Webb, NMSS

ADAMS Accession Package Number: ML18124A327

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