

Introduction to the Proposed License Amendment for the United Nuclear Corporation's Church Rock Mill Site

United Nuclear Corporation (UNC) has submitted a license application to the United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) with a request to amend its Source Materials License No. SUA-1475 for the former Church Rock Mill and Tailings Site under the requirements specified in Title 10 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 40, Domestic Licensing of Source Material. The Church Rock Mill Site is located in McKinley County, New Mexico.

UNC's License Amendment Request (LAR)

On September 24, 2018, UNC submitted an application, including a Technical Report and Supplemental Environmental Report, requesting that the NRC grant a license amendment to UNC that would allow disposal of Northeast Church Rock (NECR) mine waste within the footprint of the tailings impoundment at the UNC Church Rock Mill Site. UNC's application materials are available at:

<https://www.nrc.gov/info-finder/decommissioning/uranium/united-nuclear-corporation-unc-.html>

- The former 902-acre Church Rock Uranium Mill Site and 125-acre NECR Mine Site are located approximately 17 miles northeast of Gallup, New Mexico. The Church Rock Uranium Mill Site is privately owned by UNC and is a NRC-licensed facility and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Superfund site. The NECR Mine Site is located on the Navajo Nation trust land immediately south of the Navajo reservation and is located less than a mile from the UNC Church Rock Mill Site.
- The proposed action would allow UNC to dispose of approximately 1,000,000 cubic yards of mine waste from the NECR Mine Site at the mill site. The mine waste would be placed within the footprint of the Church Rock Mill Site Tailings Disposal Area.
- The mine waste is considered Atomic Energy Act non-11e.(2) byproduct material. The Department of Energy (DOE) is expected to be the long-term custodian for the UNC mill tailings impoundment following termination of NRC license SUA-1475.

UNC Church Rock Project

NRC's Role and Licensing Action Review

The NRC licenses and regulates the nation's civilian use of radioactive materials to protect public health and safety, promote the common defense and security, and protect the environment. The NRC review of UNC's application consists of a safety review and an environmental review to support a final licensing amendment decision:

- Safety Review – A Safety Evaluation Report (SER) documents the NRC's evaluation of potential radiological consequences of UNC's proposed action to determine if that action (disposing of NECR mine waste at the UNC Mill Site) can be accomplished safely and securely.
- Environmental Review – The NRC's Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) documents the NRC's thorough independent evaluation of the significance of the potential environmental impacts of the proposed action and reasonable alternatives to the proposed action. During this process, the public has the opportunity to comment on the scope of the review and the draft report.

What the EIS Will Contain

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) as well as NRC's NEPA implementing guidance in NUREG-1748, "Environmental Review Guidance for Licensing Actions Associated with Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards Programs," the EIS would contain:

- Descriptions of the Proposed Action, No-Action alternative, and Purpose and Need for the Proposed Action, as defined during the EIS scoping process
- Descriptions of the affected environment
- Evaluation of the potential environmental impacts of the Proposed Action, No-Action Alternative, and any other reasonable alternatives (these may be identified through the scoping process)
- Evaluation of the cumulative impacts of the proposed action and other reasonable foreseeably future actions.
- A preliminary recommendation of the preferred alternative.

In developing the EIS, the NRC staff will consider input from other Federal, State and local agencies, Tribal input from National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 activities, information from the NRC staff site visit and audit, the UNC application, and public comments. The draft EIS will be issued for public comment prior to being finalized.