

OCT 30 1989

Mr. H. Anthony Ruckel
Attorney at Law
1123-C Delaware Street
Denver, Colorado 80204

Dear Mr. Ruckel:

Thank you for your letter of September 27, 1989, in which you shared the Colorado West Mill Tailings Coalition's observations of the Grand Junction, Colorado, Cheney Reservoir site.

The NRC's role in the Uranium Mill Tailings Remedial Action Program (UMTRAP) has been established by the Uranium Mill Tailings Radiation Control Act of 1978 (UMTRCA). In accordance with UMTRCA, NRC is to provide concurrence that the Department of Energy (DOE) has selected and performed remedial actions at UMTRAP sites such that they meet standards established by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

For the Grand Junction UMTRAP site, the NRC staff has reviewed draft DOE remedial action plan documents. One area of comment resulting from this review was the need to better understand the site hydrology. DOE subsequently initiated the additional characterization program that is presently in progress. The NRC staff has been to the site on several occasions and has observed the conditions in the exploratory trenches referred to in your letter. Our further review of the Grand Junction/Cheney Reservoir remedial action plans is currently on hold pending DOE's completion of the additional characterization and submittal of a revised remedial action plan.

Upon our receipt of the revised plans, we will continue our review and issue a concurrence decision based on whether there is reasonable assurance that the planned remedial action will meet the EPA standards. It should be noted that although the EPA standards include stringent requirements for water resources protection, the presence of groundwater at a site does not necessarily mean that those EPA standards can't be met. When our further review begins, we will consider the additional information that you have provided in your September 27, 1989 letter to me.

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PDR WASTE
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If you wish to discuss any other aspects of the NRC's actions on this site, please contact me or Dan Gillen of my staff (301-492-0517).

Sincerely,

(SIGNED) PAUL H. LOHAUS

Paul H. Lohaus, Chief
Operations Branch
Division of Low-Level Waste Management
and Decommissioning, NMSS

cc: Sally Mann, DOE Hq.
Mark Matthews, DOE Alb.
Howard Roitman, DOE Co.

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SUBJECT ABSTRACT: RESPONSE TO COLORADO WEST MILL TAILINGS COALITION
ON GRAND JUNCTION

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Paul Lohaus, Chief
Operations Branch
Division of Low-Level Waste Management
and Decommissioning, NMSS

cc: S. Mann, DOE Hq.
M. Matthews, DOE Alb.

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DATE :10/17/89	:10/17/89	:10/ /89	:10/ /89	:10/ /89	:10/ /89	:10/ /89