



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

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MEMORANDUM FOR: Ross A. Scarano, Chief  
Uranium Recovery Licensing Branch

THRU: Harry J. Pettengill, Section Leader  
Operating Facilities Section II  
Uranium Recovery Licensing Branch

FROM: Peter J. Garcia, Jr.  
Operating Facilities Section  
Uranium Recovery Licensing Branch

SUBJECT: MINUTES FOR MEETING WITH ATLAS MINERALS (DOCKET NO. 40-3453)

Place and Date

USNRC, Silver Spring, MD, December 11, 1980

Attendees

R. Exby - Atlas	J. Linehan - NRC
G. Swanby - Atlas	H. Pettengill - NRC
R. Weaver - Atlas	T. Vandell - NRC
B. Alcock - Atlas	T. Johnson - NRC
	P. Garcia - NRC
	R. Scarano - NRC

T. Downard - Utah State Department of Health

Purpose

To discuss the following:

- (1) Future storage of tailings
- (2) Seepage at the Moab site
- (3) Surety
- (4) 40 CFR 190 Compliance
- (5) A recent request by Atlas to authorize an increased yellowcake production rate
- (6) The impact on Atlas of the recently published rules and regulations regarding uranium milling



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Summary

The meeting was held to discuss the six topics listed above. A breakdown of the meeting according to topic follows:

(1) Future storage of tailings

Atlas informed NRC that they had recently completed a tailings disposal alternative study as previously requested by the NRC staff. The alternative study will be submitted to NRC in the near future pending a decision on a preferred alternative.

Atlas then presented for discussion a preliminary concept for below grade tailings disposal within the confines of the existing site boundary. This concept is not included in the alternative study performed by Atlas. The concept would consist of the diversion of Moab Wash and the excavation of a pit to the north of the present impoundment. This pit would provide approximately four years of tailings storage capacity.

Since the anticipated remaining life of the project is ten years, a lift on the current tailings embankment system would be required in order to provide the necessary storage capacity. The material excavated in constructing the pit would be used in constructing the lift.

NRC staff indicated that, while the below grade concept as presented could not be ruled out, very detailed and comprehensive analyses of all aspects of the plan would be required. The location of the proposed pit would be in the current path of Moab Wash. The ability to safely divert Moab Wash is an extremely important aspect of the plan. In addition, information would be required regarding the tailings deposition method and groundwater impacts associated with the plan.

Based on the discussion of the concept and the serious concerns voiced by NRC, Atlas personnel stated they would reach a decision shortly on whether to proceed with the engineering studies required should this concept become Atlas' preferred plan. As previously mentioned, the alternative study will be submitted for NRC evaluation once a decision is reached on a preferred alternative.

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The NRC will look into the possibility of authorizing an 18 foot lift to the existing tailings embankment system prior to receipt of the alternative study. All alternatives evaluated in the study involve off-site locations not currently under Atlas control. The lead time involved in Atlas obtaining control of such a site would necessitate a raise on the existing retention system. Also, as previously stated, should the onsite below grade concept be the preferred alternative, the raise will still be necessary. However, the raise could not be authorized until all stability, surety, and reclamation concerns are satisfactorily resolved.

(2) Seepage at the Moab site

Atlas stated that they will incorporate into their well sampling program the procedures specified in Item 3 of the NRC letter dated October 24, 1980.

Other concerns specified in the October 24 letter involve the amount of seepage occurring at the site and where the seepage is going. These concerns could have an impact on the NRC decision concerning a future lift on the tailings embankment system. The concerns will only be answered by a study involving additional borings to identify the extent and direction of possible seepage plumes.

Atlas will submit a program for the number and location of borings around the tailings pond for NRC review and comments prior to commencement of the program.

(3) Surety

Atlas indicated that they have approached several surety companies to attempt to obtain a bond, but have been turned down. However, Atlas had not presented a specific plan for reclamation to the bonding companies.

Atlas indicated they would attempt to obtain a bond against a specific reclamation plan. However, before they approach a surety company, they will first submit to NRC for review and approval a specific reclamation plan to meet existing license requirements and/or the new regulations.

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(4) 40 CFR 190 Compliance

NRC informed Atlas that, as a result of NRC implementation of 40 CFR 190, an order would shortly be issued amending Atlas' license to require the following:

- a) A background air monitoring station shall be operational by April 1, 1981.
- b) A quality assurance program equivalent to that specified in Regulatory Guide 4.15 shall be implemented.
- c) The environmental monitoring program should include the lower limits of detection specified in Regulatory Guide 4.14.

(5) A recent request by Atlas to authorize an increase in yellowcake production.

The request by Atlas did not contain sufficient information to enable NRC to make a determination on the request. In addition, the request was not accompanied by the appropriate amendment fees. NRC will transmit to Atlas a letter requesting the additional information needed and the required fees.

(6) The impact on Atlas of the newly published regulations for uranium milling.

NRC informed Atlas that they will be required to submit within nine months plans for meeting the regulations, as will all NRC milling licensees. A meeting may be held in the future to discuss NRC implementation of the regulations.

A set of meeting minutes read and signed by J. Linehan, NRC, and G. Swanby, Atlas, is attached.

*Pete J. Garcia Jr.*

Peter J. Garcia, Jr.  
Operating Facilities Section II  
Uranium Recovery Licensing Branch  
Division of Waste Management

Approved by:

*Harry J. Pettengill*  
Harry J. Pettengill, Section Leader  
Uranium Recovery Licensing Branch

cc: T. Downard  
R. Weaver

Attendees

NRC-Atlas Meeting of December 11, 1980

JOHN LINEHAN - NRC

Harry Pettengill - NRC

Pete J. Garcia Jr. - NRC

T. Richard Downard - Utah state Health Dept

RT EXBY ATLAS

G.T. Swainby ATLAS

R. W. W. Atlas

BOB ALCOCK ATLAS

Ross Searano NRC

TERRY VAND ELL NRC

Ted Johnson NRC

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## Meeting Atlas Mishra

### 1) Future Storage of Tailings

The meeting began with a discussion of alternative sites for tailings disposal, along with a discussion of Atlas' preliminary concept for below grade disposal onsite.

NRC staff informed Atlas of potential problems with Atlas' below grade concept. While the concept was <sup>not</sup> ruled out, NRC staff indicated that technical aspects of the plan will require much analysis. Atlas will look at the concept in light of NRC comments and make a decision regarding technical feasibility of the concept.

Atlas will submit the alternative study in the future. NRC staff will look into possibility of authorizing an 18 foot lift to the existing tailings embankment system prior to receipt of alternative study, assuming all stability, ~~and~~ surety, and reclamation concerns are answered.

### 2) Seepage

The meeting continued with a discussion of seepage from the impoundment. Atlas stated that they will incorporate sampling procedures as specified in NRC letter of

Item 3 of



October 24, 1980. Atlas will submit a program for additional borings (wells) between pond and river to attempt to identify extent and direction of possible seepage plumes. NRC will comment on the program.

3) Surety

Atlas stated that they have attempted to obtain a bond from bonding companies and been turned down. NRC staff stated that an ~~exact~~ <sup>specific</sup> reclamation plan must be presented to the company for them to bond against.

Atlas stated they would attempt to obtain a bond, but would first come in to NRC with a specific plan to meet existing license and/or ~~GETS~~ requirements. We will ~~approve~~ <sup>review</sup> the plan.

4) 40 CFR 190

NRC informed Atlas that an order would be issued amending their license to require the following:

- 1) background station by Jan. 1, 1981
- 2) QA program equivalent to that in reg. guide 4.15
- 3) LID's equal to those in reg. guide 4.14

(3)

5.) license condition #11

NRC will request additional information to be submitted by Atlas before we can consider a request for an increase in yellowcake production

6.) Final Regs.

Atlas will be required to come in with plans for meeting the final regulations within 9 months.

Meeting involving NRC and all licensees may ~~will~~ be held to discuss implementation of regulations.

Finally, NRC will check into Atlas amendment request for change in personnel monitor location and other minor ~~and~~ items.

- John Finckel, NRC  
G.P. Swentley