

MAR 8 1988

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DOCKET NO: 40-8820

LICENSEE: Amax, Inc.
Parkersburg, West Virginia

SUBJECT: ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT - RENEWAL APPLICATION DATED
MAY 29, 1987

Background

By letter dated January 14, 1986, Amax requested that License No. SMB-1418 be amended to release for unrestricted use all of the Parkersburg site except the stabilization area shown on Plate II and described in Exhibit A. By letter dated March 24, 1987, the NRC granted the request subject to the conditions presented in the Environmental Assessment. By letter dated May 29, 1987, Amax requested that License No. SMB-1418 be renewed as it expired on June 30, 1987, and cover only the contaminated soil and rubble in the stabilized area. By letter dated June 15, 1987, Amax submitted a "Declaration of Restrictive Covenant" pertaining to the Parkersburg property that contains the restrictions required by the NRC letter dated March 24, 1987. The June 15, 1987, letter also enclosed a memorandum prepared by James E. Kerrigan dated June 4, 1987, that addressed the other condition imposed by the NRC letter dated March 24, 1987, which concerned the buried radioactive material outside the stabilized area of the Parkersburg site.

The Proposed Action

The proposed action is renewal of License No. SMB-1418 authorizing Amax to continue storing contaminated soil and rubble containing natural thorium and uranium in the stabilization area located in Wood County, West Virginia, as described in Exhibit A and the plot designated in Exhibit B. This action also releases the remainder of the site for unrestricted use except as stated in the Declaration of Restrictive Covenant dated June 3, 1987.

Need for the Proposed Action

Renewal of the license has the effect of continuing the licensee's surveillance and control of the stabilized material to assure its security and maintenance until the U. S. Department of Energy takes over responsibility for the material.

The release of the remainder of the site allows it to be put to productive use.

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Alternatives to the Proposed Action

Denial of the license renewal for the continued storage of the contaminated soil and rubble would require that this material be transferred to a facility licensed to accept this type of material. Space is not presently available in LLW burial grounds for this material; even if space were available, the risks and costs of moving the material greatly exceed the benefits to be gained.

Requiring the licensee to retain the remainder of the site under license is an alternative which unnecessarily restricts the usefulness of the area.

Environmental Impact of the Proposed Action

The contaminated soil and rubble was placed in an engineered stabilization area which was completed in November 1982. Since then, the State of West Virginia's Department of Health has examined the condition of the stabilized area every 6 months and assayed samples of water from the four monitoring wells. In all of the reports, the assays were well below the levels of 15 pCi/L alpha and 50 pCi/L beta activity specified as item 13 in the license. Some channel erosion occurred during 1983. This was promptly fixed and no channel erosion has since been reported. The concerns expressed in NRC letter dated March 24, 1987, have been adequately addressed in James E. Kerrigan's memo dated June 4, 1987, and enclosed in Amax's June 15, 1987, letter. Therefore, there should be no detrimental environmental impacts from the small quantities of thorium and uranium in the remainder of the site provided that these areas are not disturbed.

Conclusion

Based upon the information presented above, the environmental impacts associated with the proposed license renewal are expected to be insignificant. Nevertheless, it appears prudent to require the continued monitoring of the four wells for the release of radioactive material from the stabilization area. Although the stabilization area has not had any channel erosion for 4 years, a yearly inspection should be performed to be sure that if channel erosion does occur, it will be repaired.

Original Signed By:

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