



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

May 3, 1999

Mr. Roy S. Blickwedel
Remedial Project Manager
General Electric Company
640 Freedom Business Center
King of Prussia, PA 19406

SUBJECT: ABANDONMENT OF WELLS AT CHURCH ROCK SITE, SOURCE MATERIALS
LICENSE SUA-1475

Dear Mr. Blickwedel:

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) staff has evaluated the request in General Electric Company's (GE's) letter dated January 20, 1999, that NRC agree to abandonment of wells located on the United Nuclear Corporation (UNC) Church Rock uranium mill and tailings site near Gallup, New Mexico. The GE letter states that the wells, which are listed in Table 3 of the letter, are not part of the groundwater Corrective Action Program (CAP) at the Church Rock site, and are not being considered for use in any future water level or water quality monitoring programs. The GE letter also states that well abandonment will be conducted in accordance with guidelines established by the New Mexico State Engineer Office.

The staff's review has determined that the list in Table 3 of the GE letter does not contain any wells required by the groundwater CAP, and that abandonment of the wells does not require an amendment to License SUA-1475. Discussions between the NRC staff, staff of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) Region 6 Office, staff of the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED), and staff of the Navajo Nation Environmental Protection Agency (NNEPA), have indicated agreement on the well abandonment, since plugging the wells will remove possible sources of cross-contamination of the groundwater.

Therefore, abandonment of the wells listed in Table 3 of GE's January 20, 1999, letter is approved, subject to the following conditions. GE is required to notify the NRC, EPA, NMED, and NNEPA of the schedule for plugging so that the process can be observed, if deemed necessary. In addition, GE is required to have the process reviewed by the New Mexico State Engineer Office, and provide to the NRC a copy of the State Engineer Office Well Closure Compliance letter.

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R. Blickwedel

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May 3, 1999

Please contact Ken Hooks, the NRC Project Manager for the Church Rock site, at (301) 415-7777, if you have any questions concerning this letter.

Sincerely,

Charlotte Abrams for

N. King Stablein, Acting Chief
Uranium Recovery and
Low-Level Waste Branch
Division of Waste Management
Office of Nuclear Material Safety
and Safeguards

Docket No. 40-8907
License No. SUA-1475

cc: Greg Lyssy, EPA Region 6, Dallas
Beiling Liu, NMED, Santa Fe
Levon Benally, NNEPA, Window Rock
Larry Bush, UNC Church Rock
Russel Edge, DOE Grand Junction

R. Blickwedel

-2-

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R. Blickwedel

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[C. Abrams for]

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