



June 30, 1998
GDP 98-0133

Dr. Malcolm R. Knapp
Acting Director, Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards
Attention: Document Control Desk
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D.C. 20555-0001

Portsmouth Gaseous Diffusion Plant (PORTS)
Docket No. 70-7002
Activities in the X-705 South Annex

Dear Dr. Knapp:

In Reference 1, the United States Enrichment Corporation (USEC) asked for the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) approval of a Certificate Amendment Request regarding the highly enriched uranium (HEU) cylinder valve replacement activities in the X-705 South Annex. The NRC provided approval of this activity in Reference 2. To complete this activity, the X-705 South Annex was temporarily converted to Department of Energy (DOE) regulation. In Reference 1, USEC stated that this activity would be completed such that Planned Expeditious Handling (PEH) activities will not be impacted. Reference 3 transmitted a request to NRC to convert the X-705 South Annex back to NRC regulation as soon as possible, and also stated that there were no PEH activities scheduled until July 1998.

USEC has identified an activity that needs to be performed under DOE regulation in the X-705 South Annex. This activity involves two HEU cylinders that have plugged valves. Since the X-705 South Annex has not been converted back to NRC regulation, USEC has been discussing this issue with NRC and DOE and has been working with DOE to obtain their approval to complete the activity to unplug the HEU cylinders while the X-705 South Annex is still under DOE regulation. This is required so that these cylinders can be fed to the cascade under the HEU refeed program. USEC has determined that there are not any PEH activities planned until July 23, 1998. It has been further determined that the activity to unplug the two HEU cylinders can be completed by July 16, 1998, including all activities necessary to convert the X-705 South Annex to NRC regulation. Therefore, USEC is withdrawing the request for conversion of the X-705 South Annex back to NRC regulation that was provided in Reference 3 until such time as the activity to unplug the two HEU cylinders is complete and USEC has completed all required activities to return the X-705 South Annex to NRC regulation. These activities are outlined in Reference 1, and will also include a security sweep of the X-705 South Annex for DOE to provide a high degree of assurance that no materials exist in the area that would cause USEC to exceed the Category III possession limits (as documented in Safety Analysis Report Table 1-3) across all NRC regulated areas. During this time, USEC will continue to comply with all requirements stated in Reference 1 and the current revision of the Portsmouth Gaseous Diffusion Plant (PORTS) Application for Nuclear Regulatory Commission Certification.

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In addition, USEC has identified another activity that needs to be completed in the X-705 South Annex for operational purposes within this same time-frame. This activity involves the cleaning of up to two compressors and 24 valves, which contain LEU, for use as plant spares. USEC is currently working with DOE to obtain approval to perform this activity in the X-705 South Annex under DOE regulation. It is necessary to begin cleaning these components while X-705 is under DOE regulation because these components may be required during upcoming cell maintenance activities. If DOE approval is obtained, the compressor and valve cleaning activity will be conducted so as to not adversely impact return of the X-705 South Annex to NRC regulation. Any portion of the compressors or valves which are not cleaned prior to unplugging of the two HEU cylinders, will be cleaned after the facility is returned to NRC regulation.

Both activities described above will be performed and completed such that PEH schedules are not adversely impacted.

New commitments made in this submittal are listed in Enclosure 1. If you have any questions, please contact Mark Lombard at (301) 564-3248.

Sincerely,

S. A. Toelle

Steven A. Toelle
Nuclear Regulatory Assurance and Policy Manager

cc: DOE Site Safety Representative, PORTS
Mr. Randall M. DeVault (DOE)
NRC Resident Inspector, PORTS

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REFERENCES

1. Letter from James H. Miller (USEC) to Carl J. Paperiello (NRC), "Certificate Amendment Request - Highly Enriched Uranium (HEU) Cylinder Valve Replacement," Portsmouth Gaseous Diffusion Plant, Docket No. 70-7002, GDP 98-0009, February 3, 1998.
2. Letter from Carl J. Paperiello (NRC) to James H. Miller (USEC), "Portsmouth Certificate Amendment Request - Highly Enriched Uranium (HEU) Cylinder Valve Replacement (TAC No. L32056)," April 20, 1998.
3. Letter from Steven A. Toelle (USEC) to Malcolm R. Knapp (NRC), "Notification that Highly Enriched Uranium Cylinder Valve Replacement Activities in the X-705 South Annex are Complete," Portsmouth Gaseous Diffusion Plant, Docket No. 70-7002, GDP 98-0118, June 10, 1998.

New Commitments Made in This Submittal

1. During the time that activities are being performed in the X-705 South Annex to unplug the 2 HEU cylinder valves and cleaning of up to two (2) compressors and 24 valves, USEC will continue to comply with all requirements stated in Reference 1 and the current revision of the Portsmouth Gaseous Diffusion Plant (PORTS) Application for Nuclear Regulatory Commission Certification.
2. A portion or all of the compressors and valves will be cleaned before the unplugging of the 2 HEU cylinders is completed but not so as to adversely impact return of the X-705 South Annex to NRC regulation. Any portion of the uncleaned equipment will be cleaned after the facility is returned to NRC regulation.
3. The unplugging of the two (2) HEU cylinder valves and cleaning of compressors and valves will be performed and completed such that PEH schedules are not adversely impacted.