

WM-60/GCP/87/07/07

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MEMORANDUM FOR: Paul H. Lohaus, Acting Chief  
Operations Branch, LLWM

THRU: Myron H. Fliegel, Section Leader  
Uranium Recovery Section  
Operations Branch, LLWM

FROM: George C. Pangburn, Project Manager  
Uranium Recovery Section  
Operations Branch, LLWM

SUBJECT: PROPOSED CONCURRENCE ON RIVERTON FINAL REMEDIAL ACTION PLAN

The staff has completed its review of the Department of Energy's final Remedial Action Plan and Site Design for Stabilization of the Inactive Uranium Mill Tailings Site at Riverton, Wyoming, dated June 1987. The staff's review determined that all but four of the comments made by NRC on the preliminary final Remedial Action Plan (RAP) were satisfactorily addressed by DOE in the final RAP. These outstanding comments all relate to groundwater resources and protection, and it is the staff's conclusion that their resolution should be delayed until after the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) promulgates its Title I groundwater standards.

However, during the review of the final RAP the staff examined the "Final Plans and Specifications" contained in Appendix C of the final RAP and identified one issue for resolution prior to NRC concurrence. This issue dealt with DOE's plans to seal existing monitor wells P-14, P-15, and P-16. (See memorandum of M. Weber to M. Fliegel dated July 2, 1987 for additional details.) The basis for the proposed abandonment of these wells, which are located north of the tailings pile at Riverton, was unclear to the staff. Bob Peel, site manager at the TAC for Riverton, was contacted and indicated that DOE and TAC representatives visited the Riverton site in April 1987 to inspect the condition of the monitor wells. This inspection found that wells P-14, P-15, and P-16 had suffered broken or shattered casings as well as contamination by soil or debris. Renovation was felt to be impractical, and should data be needed from these areas, the TAC felt it would be better to install new wells. With respect to abandonment of wells located on the tailings pile, the RAC (MK-Ferguson) was of the opinion that all such wells were completed above the proposed excavation level for the tailings and contaminated sub-grade material. The TAC had not checked every well to assure that was the case and requested that the RAC take a second look. The RAC is in the process of doing that and based on the results of their examination, may issue a change notice to the selected contractor to seal additional wells. However, results are not expected until after contract award. The staff has concluded that the facts presented in the aforementioned telecon adequately resolve the concerns described above.

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With this resolution, there are no technical issues preventing concurrence in the final RAP for Riverton. There are two broader issues which necessitate that NRC's concurrence be granted subject to certain conditions. These are the promulgation of EPA Title I groundwater standards and the need for the selected Title II Licensee to have an amendment to their license authorizing the proposed action. Therefore, the staff recommends that in accordance with Section 108(a)(1) of UMTRCA, NRC concur in the proposed remedial action for the Riverton site subject to the following conditions:

1. Upon promulgation of EPA groundwater standards for Title I sites, DOE will review data on groundwater conditions at the Riverton processing site and will make an assessment of the need for further remedial action to come into compliance with those standards in a timely manner. DOE's proposed course of action will be submitted to NRC for review and concurrence.
2. DOE's contractor/designee will have in place prior to the beginning of remedial action, an amendment to their NRC Source Material License approving a revised reclamation plan and allowing for the receipt, disposal, stabilization and ultimate reclamation of the Riverton tailings at a licensed facility. The contractor/designee will also have in place a financial surety arrangement adequate to assure reclamation of the Riverton tailings in the event of default.

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