

JUN 23 1989

DOCKET NO: 40-7580

LICENSEE: Fansteel, Inc.

FACILITY: Muskogee, Oklahoma

SUBJECT: CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION FOR LICENSE AMENDMENT APPLICATION  
DATED JUNE 21, 1989

#### Background

Fansteel has held a license since January 27, 1967 to process tin slags, natural ore concentrates, and synthetic and beneficiated ore concentrates which are either chemically or physically upgraded. The source material contained in these raw materials are primarily uranium and thorium species, containing between 0.05 to 0.30 percent  $U_3O_8$  and 0.01 to 0.60 percent  $ThO_2$ . After the columbium and tantalum have been extracted, the remaining waste slurry, which contains licensed material, is first discharged in settling Pond 3. On June 18, 1989, Pond 3 developed a leak. As a result, the licensee ceased discharging the process stream into Pond 3.

#### Proposed Action

Because Pond 3 may not be used, Fansteel proposed the following modification to their plant process operations by application dated June 21, 1989. After dissolution, the waste slurry may be processed with a filter press or some other mechanical separation device to remove undissolved solids. The solids from the separation are to be stored onsite. The drums will be stored in such a manner as to preclude any unauthorized release of material. Any spillage will be washed into the neutralization system.

#### Need For The Proposed Action

This action is required in order for the plant to continue operation until the original method of processing slurry is restored.

#### Alternatives to the Proposed Action

The only alternative would be to suspend plant operation until the leak in Pond 3 is fixed, or replaced by a new pond. At this time, it is not possible to predict how long either of these options would take. As discussed in the next section, the environmental impacts associated with the proposed process modification are not significant.

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Environmental Impact of the Proposed Action

The modified process step will not increase the current production rate of solid wastes. There will be only a slight increase in the possibility of contaminating the environment during processing the slurry and filling the poly-lined drums compared to piping the slurry directly to Pond 3 for clarification. This aspect has been evaluated and determined not to be significant in a Safety Evaluation Report.

Conclusion

The staff concludes that the following conditions have been met:

1. There is no significant change in the type or significant increase in the amount of any effluents that may be released offsite,
2. There is no significant increase in individual or cumulative occupational radiation exposures,
3. There is no significant construction impact, and
4. There is no significant increase in the potential for or consequences from radiological accidents.

Therefore, in accordance with 10 CFR 51.22(c)(11), neither an Environmental Assessment nor an Environmental Impact Statement is warranted for this proposed action.

FOR THE U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Original Signed By

Leland C. Rouse, Chief  
Fuel Cycle Safety Branch  
Division of Industrial and Medical  
Nuclear Safety, NMSS

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NAME : GLaRoche:jc	: LEBrown	: WSPennington	: JUSwift	: LCRouse	:	:
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