



Department of Energy

Washington, DC 20585

May 28, 2021

U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
ATTN: Document Control Desk, Deputy Director
Mail Stop T8 F5
Washington, DC 20555-0001

Subject: U.S. Department of Energy, Office of Legacy Management Notification of Temporary Pause to the Preparation of the Draft Environmental Assessment of Groundwater Compliance at the Shiprock, New Mexico, Disposal Site.

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is a notification that the U.S. Department of Energy Office of Legacy Management (LM) National Environmental Policy Act Review Board (NRB) has made a decision to temporarily pause the ongoing Environmental Assessment (EA) of groundwater compliance at the Shiprock, New Mexico, Disposal Site. During internal scoping, it was determined that the results of a yet to be performed condition assessment of the evaporation pond liner will represent critical information needed to refine the purpose and need for the EA and for the development of EA alternatives.

The future of the evaporation pond has been a central focus of the EA. Several alternatives are currently being considered for the evaporation pond; however, the inclusion of some alternatives is dependent upon the current condition and remaining lifespan of the pond liner, which is uncertain. As such, there is a need to evaluate and inspect the evaporation pond liner to assess its current condition and remaining lifespan before continuing the development of the EA.

The liner inspection will be conducted by a subcontractor in June–July 2021, and the associated report is expected to be provided by the subcontractor in late summer 2021. Once LM has reviewed the report, the NRB will convene to reevaluate the purpose and need for the EA and determine the best path forward.

This notification is intended to keep the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) informed of the progress and status of relevant activities and projects at the Shiprock site. No response or action from the NRC is requested at this time.

Please contact me at (970) 248-6018 or Mark.Kautsky@lm.doe.gov if you have any questions. Please address any correspondence to my attention at:

U.S. Department of Energy
Office of Legacy Management
2597 Legacy Way
Grand Junction, CO 81503

Sincerely,



Digitally signed by MARK
KAUTSKY
Date: 2021.05.28 15:14:59 -06'00'

Mark Kautsky
Shiprock Site Manager

cc via email:

Dominic Orlando, NRC
Gilbert Dayzie, NN AML/UMTRA
Joni Tallbull, NN AML/UMTRA
Melvin Yazzie, NN AML/UMTRA
Joyce Chavez, DOE-LM
Paul Kerl, DOE-LM
Nicole Olin, DOE-LM
Jeff Carman, RSI
Yvonne Deyo, RSI
Anthony Farinacci, RSI
Mike Logan, RSI
David Miller, RSI
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