



UNITED STATES  
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

November 30, 2021

**VIA EMAIL ONLY**

Ms. Valinda Shirley  
Executive Director  
Navajo Nation Environmental Protection Agency  
P.O. Box 339  
Window Rock, AZ 86515  
[valinda.shirley@navajo-nsn.gov](mailto:valinda.shirley@navajo-nsn.gov)

SUBJECT: U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION OUTREACH ACTIVITIES FOR  
THE CHURCH ROCK MILL SITE LICENSE AMENDMENT AND DRAFT  
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (DOCKET NUMBER: 040-8907)

Dear Ms. Shirley:

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is providing a summary of the NRC's activities to support the public comment process on its draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Church Rock Mill site license amendment request. The DEIS was issued for public comment in November 2020. The comment period ended on November 1, 2021 after three extensions.

As part of our outreach to gather comments throughout the comment period, the NRC held three public meetings online and by telephone in November and December 2020 and April 2021; held telephone meetings with certain chapter houses in October 2021; ran detailed radio broadcasts about the project on local Navajo stations several times throughout the comment period; published newspaper ads and detailed articles as newspaper inserts; and participated in standing meetings hosted by other agencies (e.g., U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's meetings with the Red Water Pond Road community). These activities are described further in the enclosure.

The NRC staff met regularly with Navajo Nation Environmental Protection Agency (NNEPA) staff, who offered suggestions on how best to reach the Navajo communities who do not have reliable access to internet and cellular phone services. NNEPA staff also provided suggestions for outreach in light of the public health emergency and related restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The NRC staff appreciated these suggestions and were able to implement several of the suggested ideas, such as meeting with individual chapter houses and using local radio and newspapers to keep the public informed about the project. The staff found that the chapter house meetings by telephone engaged people who may not have been able to attend the NRC's public meetings. Other suggestions, such as in person, local meetings and door-to-door engagement, were not able to be implemented due to the public health emergency. The NRC staff will keep these suggestions in mind for future NRC reviews involving the Navajo Nation.

During the 360-day comment period, the NRC received over 100 pieces of correspondence which included approximately 1,300 individual comments. The NRC received comments from

Navajo Nation agencies and organizations, as well as Federal, state, and local agencies and individual members of the public. The NRC will provide a summary of the comments and a response to those comments as an appendix in the final EIS, which is scheduled to be published in May 2022.

The NRC staff will continue to meet with your staff on a regular basis throughout the NRC's environmental review. Should your staff have further questions regarding the NRC's environmental review, they may contact Ms. Ashley Waldron via email at [Ashley.Waldron@nrc.gov](mailto:Ashley.Waldron@nrc.gov) or by phone at (301) 415-7317. If you would like to speak with me directly, you may reach me via email at [Jessie.Quintero@nrc.gov](mailto:Jessie.Quintero@nrc.gov) or by phone at (301) 415-7476. If you are interested in speaking with our Division Director, Mr. John Tappert, he can be reached via email at [John.Tappert@nrc.gov](mailto:John.Tappert@nrc.gov) or by phone at (301) 415-2486.

Sincerely,



Signed by Quintero, Jessie  
on 11/30/21

Jessie M. Quintero, Chief  
Environmental Review Materials Branch  
Division of Rulemaking, Environmental,  
and Financial Support  
Office of Nuclear Material Safety  
and Safeguards

Docket No. 040-8907  
License No. SUA-1475

Enclosure:  
Summary of U.S. NRC Outreach  
During Public Comment Period

cc:  
Dariel Yazzie, NNEPA [darielyazzie@navajo-nsn.gov](mailto:darielyazzie@navajo-nsn.gov)  
Lee Anna Martinez, NNEPA [lamartinez@navajo-nsn.gov](mailto:lamartinez@navajo-nsn.gov)

## **Summary of U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission Outreach During Public Comment Period**

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) issued [the draft Environmental Impact Statement \(DEIS\)](#) for public comment in November 2020. The NRC granted three extensions to the public comment period, which ultimately closed on November 1, 2021. During the public comment period, the NRC staff conducted outreach with the public and Navajo Nation communities while faced with the challenges of the public health emergency, which has not allowed for in-person interactions. These challenges were compounded by the local communities' limited cellular and internet services.

Below is a summary of the activities conducted by the NRC staff during the comment period to engage the local communities. We appreciate the Navajo Nation Environmental Protection Agency (NNEPA) staff's helpful suggestions and feedback in identifying many of these activities.

### **Public Meetings**

The NRC held three public meetings on [December 2 and 9, 2020 and April 29, 2021](#) via webinar and land-line telephone (toll-free). The meeting on April 29, 2021 was held in the evening, from 6 PM to 9 PM Mountain Time to accommodate people who work during the day. Transcripts, audio recordings, and presentation materials for all three of our public meetings can be accessed on our project webpage: <https://www.nrc.gov/info-finder/decommissioning/uranium/united-nuclear-corporation/meetings.html>

### **Radio Broadcasts**

The NRC staff prepared three scripts for radio broadcast that describe the history of the Church Rock mine and mill sites, the DEIS, and the NRC staff's safety evaluation.

These pre-recorded broadcasts were aired several times in April and May on the KTTN and KGAK radio stations in English and in the Navajo language. The broadcasts were aired on these stations in June, July, August, September, and October. The broadcasts are available through links on our webpage (see link above) or on YouTube at:

[https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLBpOUiOs1fJY\\_FDcFZFSHFgm2w4AG6Yj-](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLBpOUiOs1fJY_FDcFZFSHFgm2w4AG6Yj-).

### **Newspaper Ads and Articles**

The NRC published multiple newspaper ads during the comment period and sought to inform the Navajo communities of the comment period extensions and all the scheduled meetings and radio broadcasts. We published half and full-page ads in the Gallup Independent to describe the project and the DEIS and explain how to provide comments. We published an 8-page article (newspaper insert) in the Navajo Times and Gallup Independent in August and September 2021 (see [www.nrc.gov/docs/ML2124/ML21244A492.pdf](http://www.nrc.gov/docs/ML2124/ML21244A492.pdf)).

## **Targeted Outreach with the Red Water Pond Road Community**

The NRC staff conducted targeted outreach with the Red Water Pond Road (RWPR) community, which would be most impacted by the proposed action. The staff held telephone calls with interested community members to engage on an individual level and also offered to have small group calls. During these calls, the NRC staff explained the proposal and the NRC's role, answered questions, and listened to the participants' concerns and comments. Comments made during these calls are summarized at [www.nrc.gov/docs/ML2130/ML21306A178.pdf](http://www.nrc.gov/docs/ML2130/ML21306A178.pdf) and will be processed as comments on the Draft EIS.

The NRC staff continues to participate and be available to answer questions in monthly calls with the RWPR community hosted by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA). The NRC staff has been participating in these monthly calls since summer 2020.

## **Targeted Outreach with the Pipeline Road Community**

The NRC staff worked with NNEPA staff to organize an online meeting with the Pipeline Road Community on September 1, 2021. We appreciate NNEPA staff efforts to coordinate this meeting and ensure the community members were able to participate. In particular, we appreciate Ms. Martinez-Silversmith's efforts in coordinating this meeting. The meeting summary and transcript are available at [www.nrc.gov/docs/ML2126/ML21264A233.html](http://www.nrc.gov/docs/ML2126/ML21264A233.html). Comments made during this meeting will be processed as comments on the Draft EIS.

## **Targeted Outreach with Navajo Chapters**

Upon the NNEPA staff's suggestion, NRC staff reached out to Chapter Houses near the project site to offer online or telephone meetings. NRC staff reached out to the Standing Rock, Pinedale, Church Rock, and Coyote Canyon chapters. The NRC met with the Pinedale Chapter on October 13, 2021 (meeting summary and transcript at [www.nrc.gov/docs/ML2130/ML21307A296.html](http://www.nrc.gov/docs/ML2130/ML21307A296.html)), and with the Standing Rock Chapter on October 28, 2021 (meeting summary and transcript at [www.nrc.gov/docs/ML2131/ML21319A209.html](http://www.nrc.gov/docs/ML2131/ML21319A209.html)). Comments made during these meetings will be processed as comments on the Draft EIS. The NRC staff made several attempts by telephone and email to set up meetings with the Church Rock and Coyote Canyon chapters; however, no response was received.

## **Hardcopy Materials**

Since November 2020, the NRC staff sent out over 100 paper copies each of several documents to be distributed within the local communities or provided as handouts during meetings. We sent copies to a community point of contact, as well as to NNEPA staff, the Gallup Community Center, and the Octavia Fellin Public Library. Depending on the need at the time, we sent copies of the DEIS, the Reader's Guide (a summary document of the DEIS),

public meeting presentation materials, the NRC staff's safety evaluation, and radio broadcast scripts.

### DEIS Comments from Navajo Organizations

The table below highlights comment submittals from Navajo Nation organizations, including transcripts of oral comments received during meetings with specific Navajo communities (described above).

Organization	Link to Comments	Date Submitted
Red Water Pond Road Community	<a href="http://www.nrc.gov/docs/ML2113/ML21139A251.pdf">www.nrc.gov/docs/ML2113/ML21139A251.pdf</a>	May 19, 2021
	<a href="http://www.nrc.gov/docs/ML2114/ML21147A572.pdf">www.nrc.gov/docs/ML2114/ML21147A572.pdf</a>	May 27, 2021
	<a href="http://www.nrc.gov/docs/ML2130/ML21306A178.pdf">www.nrc.gov/docs/ML2130/ML21306A178.pdf</a>	February 22 through March 3, 2021
Dine Uranium Remediation Advisory Commission	<a href="http://www.nrc.gov/docs/ML2114/ML21147A550.pdf">www.nrc.gov/docs/ML2114/ML21147A550.pdf</a>	May 27, 2021
NNEPA	<a href="http://www.nrc.gov/docs/ML2114/ML21147A554.pdf">www.nrc.gov/docs/ML2114/ML21147A554.pdf</a>	May 27, 2021
Navajo Nation Becenti Chapter	<a href="http://www.nrc.gov/docs/ML2114/ML21147A001.pdf">www.nrc.gov/docs/ML2114/ML21147A001.pdf</a>	May 26, 2021
Bureau of Indian Affairs (Navajo Region)	<a href="http://www.nrc.gov/docs/ML2116/ML21165A131.pdf">www.nrc.gov/docs/ML2116/ML21165A131.pdf</a>	June 11, 2021
Multicultural Alliance for a Safe Environment (including signatures from Red Water Pond Road Community)	<a href="http://www.nrc.gov/docs/ML2130/ML21306A341.pdf">www.nrc.gov/docs/ML2130/ML21306A341.pdf</a>	October 28, 2021
Pipeline Road Community	<a href="http://www.nrc.gov/docs/ML2127/ML21271A163.pdf">www.nrc.gov/docs/ML2127/ML21271A163.pdf</a>	September 1, 2021
Navajo Nation Pinedale Chapter	<a href="http://www.nrc.gov/docs/ML2130/ML21307A309.pdf">www.nrc.gov/docs/ML2130/ML21307A309.pdf</a>	October 13, 2021
Navajo Nation Standing Rock Chapter	<a href="http://www.nrc.gov/docs/ML2131/ML21319A210.pdf">www.nrc.gov/docs/ML2131/ML21319A210.pdf</a>	October 28, 2021
NNEPA	<a href="http://www.nrc.gov/docs/ML2130/ML21306A334.pdf">www.nrc.gov/docs/ML2130/ML21306A334.pdf</a>	November 1, 2021

## Communications with Navajo Nation Leadership

During the DEIS comment period, the NRC met with Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez on January 26, 2021 regarding this project. NRC also received additional correspondence from President Nez. Below is a summary of the letters the NRC has received and our responses to those letters.

Correspondence	Link to Correspondence in ADAMS	Date
Letter from President Nez requesting extension for DEIS comment period	<a href="http://www.nrc.gov/docs/ML2035/ML20357B084.pdf">www.nrc.gov/docs/ML2035/ML20357B084.pdf</a>	December 21, 2020
NRC Response to President Nez's December 21 letter	<a href="http://www.nrc.gov/docs/ML2102/ML21027A421.pdf">www.nrc.gov/docs/ML2102/ML21027A421.pdf</a>	January 28, 2021
Letter from President Nez providing comments on the DEIS	<a href="http://www.nrc.gov/docs/ML2111/ML21111A360.pdf">www.nrc.gov/docs/ML2111/ML21111A360.pdf</a>	April 12, 2021
NRC Response to President Nez's April 12 letter	<a href="http://www.nrc.gov/docs/ML2113/ML21137A138.pdf">www.nrc.gov/docs/ML2113/ML21137A138.pdf</a>	May 18, 2021
Letter from President Nez requesting a second extension to DEIS comment period	<a href="http://www.nrc.gov/docs/ML2115/ML21152A051.pdf">www.nrc.gov/docs/ML2115/ML21152A051.pdf</a>	May 26, 2021
NRC Response to President Nez's May 26 letter	<a href="http://www.nrc.gov/docs/ML2117/ML21174A199.pdf">www.nrc.gov/docs/ML2117/ML21174A199.pdf</a>	June 28, 2021

In addition, the U.S. EPA sent a letter, dated August 20, 2021, to NNEPA in response to your comments on the NRC's DEIS, to provide clarifying information that pertained to U.S. EPA's jurisdiction.