

Mr. James G. Taylor, Project Manager
Merrick & Company
P.O. Box 22026
Denver, CO 80222

October 27, 1999

SUBJECT: LOST CREEK GATHERING SYSTEM PROJECT

Dear Mr. Taylor:

This letter is in response to your October 7, 1999, correspondence addressed to Mr. Bob Carlson of my staff regarding the proposed Lost Creek Gathering System Project. In your letter you provided general information about the proposed gas-line project, and request U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) concurrence for the portion of the gas-line route that crosses the NRC licensed boundary for the Western Nuclear, Inc. (WNI's) Split Rock, WY, site. In addition, you request concurrence that no permit is required from NRC to cross the aforementioned licensed boundary at the Split Rock site.

The NRC staff considered only the potential impacts from radiological hazards in its review of this request. Based on your proposal to construct the gas-line away from the tailings pile and site areas where groundwater contamination is 0.01 mg/L uranium or higher, and avoid any removal of contaminated groundwater from the site, the NRC staff determined there is negligible radiological risk associated with this project. Accordingly, the NRC staff has no objection to the proposed gas-line project crossing into the NRC licensed boundary for WNI's Split Rock site. Additionally, no permit is required from NRC to route this gas-line project through NRC licensed land.

Please be aware that the environmental effects of the proposed Lost Creek Gathering System Project were evaluated by the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Lander Field Office, Wyoming, in its October, 22, 1999, Environmental Assessment. Based on its review, BLM made a finding of no significant impact with regards to implementing this project. Furthermore, since the planned project will be crossing through WNI property, it is recommended that you make the appropriate consultations with WNI concerning its future plans with respect to groundwater restoration/remedial alternatives at its Split Rock site.

If you have any questions regarding this subject, please contact Mr. Carlson of my staff at (301) 415-8165.

Sincerely,

Original Signed By
John J. Surmeier, Chief
Uranium Recovery and Low-Level
Waste Branch
Division of Waste Management
Office of Nuclear Material Safety
and Safeguards

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cc: R. Chancellor, WDEQ

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JJS
(Initials)

10/27/99
(Date)

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**TECHNICAL EVALUATION REPORT
LOST CREEK GATHERING SYSTEM PROJECT
WESTERN NUCLEAR INC. (WNI) SITE**

DATE: 10-25-99

PROJECT MANAGER: Robert Carlson

REVIEWER: William von Till

Merrick Engineering & Architects, for the Lost Creek Gathering Company, L.L.C., by letter dated October 7, 1999, requested that the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) comment on the installation of a proposed gathering line through the WNI licensed area. The objective of this review is to determine any potential adverse effects on future groundwater remedial actions or monitoring at the site.

The project is a proposal to install a 24-inch line through the northeast corner of the NRC licensed area. This area is far from the tailings cell and not in the area of high groundwater contamination. According to the proposal, the trenching would be shallow but may encounter groundwater. Merrick states that the trenching would be outside the area where groundwater is contaminated up to 0.01 mg/L uranium and that groundwater encountered would not be removed.

NRC has not received the final Groundwater Corrective Action Plan from WNI and future groundwater remediation alternatives are not specifically known at this time. However, based on the proposal, a line installed in this area should not have any adverse effect on future groundwater remedial actions for the following reasons:

- 1) The proposed area is not located in the area of highest groundwater concentrations.
- 2) Remedial alternatives exist which can be engineered around a utility line such as the one proposed.
- 3) The proposal states that groundwater will not be removed in this action. Therefore, groundwater conditions effecting the migration of the groundwater plume would not be altered.
- 4) Any future monitoring wells necessary to monitor groundwater conditions at the site can be installed around the line.
- 5) Since this proposed line will be crossing through WNI property, WNI would also comment on the proposal and make appropriate negotiations if they felt that one of their potential groundwater remedial alternatives would be effected.

Environmental effects of this proposed line were not evaluated in this review and would need to be assessed by the Lost Creek Gathering Company, L.L.C.



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

October 27, 1999

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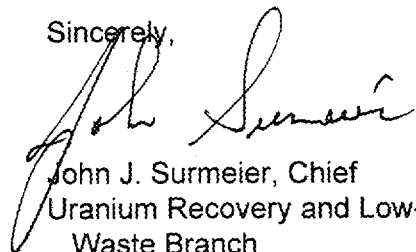
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