

NRC's Uranium Recovery New Licensing Program

Uranium Recovery Licensing
Workshop

January 11-12, 2011

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Background

- October 2007
 - Uranium on spot market > \$100/lb:
 - Potential for 23 applications for new, restart, or expansion facilities
 - 9 expected in 2008-
 - 10 expected in 2009
 - First application for Moore Ranch facility received – 10/2/2007

Background (cont.)

- October 2007 to October 2010
 - Spot market price declines
 - Many applications deferred by industry
 - Received 4 applications in 2008, one in 2009, 2 in 2010
 - 3 of 7 new applications withdrawn (2 subsequently, resubmitted)

Program Strategy

- Measured approach to staffing and contracting to reflect uncertainty in industry
- Maintaining safety at currently licensed facilities – first priority
- For new applications: first accepted, first reviewed
- Safety and environmental reviews to be integrated and proceed in parallel
- Upgrades to regulatory framework to proceed in parallel with licensing reviews

Review Strategy

- Acceptance Review
 - 60-90 Days – if accepted, hearing notice
- Safety and Environmental Reviews (proceed in parallel):
- Two – Three Year Review Metric
 - Draft SER/RAIs – 215 Days
 - Applicant Response – 30 Days
 - Draft SEIS issued – post - RAI responses
 - Staff Review, Open Item Discussion, Draft License Development, Preparation of Final SER/SEIS – 180 Days

Review Reality (First 3 Applications):

- Contracting delays resulted in safety and environmental reviews not being aligned
- Comments on GEIS and draft SEISs > than expected
- Responses to RAIs substantially delayed
- Unexpected exemption requests/license transfers compete for resources
- Outcome: Average review time ~ 33 months

Process Improvements

- Lessons learned public meeting on safety issues – January 11-12.
- Lessons learned public meeting on environmental – after Nichols and Lost Creek SEISs complete
- Pre-application audits (public) to improve submittals
- Quarterly senior management calls on application schedules
- Early initiation of Section 106 consultation and interface with EPA and BLM

Outlook – Future Applications

- Resources:
 - Will be constrained; delays in initiating some reviews likely
- Environmental:
 - GEIS and model SEISs complete, contracts in place
- Safety:
 - Final SER for Moore Ranch and RAIs available for future reference

Outlook – Future Applications (cont.)

- Communications:
 - Outreach to all parties (Tribal Governments, States, Industry, Public) to be increased
- Regulatory Framework:
 - Revisions to NUREG-1569
 - Revisions to NUREG-1748
 - Revisions to Regulatory Guides

Outlook (Cont.)

- Overall:
 - Experience with licensing by industry and staff likely to reduce review time
 - Focus on better communication will make process more transparent for all parties
 - Measured approach to staffing and contracting limits ability to respond to surges in licensing actions