



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

August 27, 2015

Mr. Richard Bush, Program Manager
U.S. Department of Energy
2597 Legacy Way
Grand Junction, CO 81503

SUBJECT: U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY PLAN TO DETERMINE THE EFFICACY OF
AN ENHANCED EVAPORATION SYSTEM AT THE TUBA CITY, ARIZONA
URANIUM MILL TAILINGS RADIATION CONTROL SITE (Docket Number
WM-00073)

Dear Mr. Bush:

I am writing in response to your letter dated July 21, 2015, in which you informed the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) of the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE's) intent to determine the efficacy of an enhanced evaporation system at the Tuba City, Arizona, Uranium Mill Tailings Radiation Control Act (UMTRCA) site (Agencywide Document Access and Management System (ADAMS) Accession Number ML15211A398).

Your letter states that, in addition to determining if the evaporation rate at the evaporation pond can be increased, you will be evaluating if the system can be operated safely and in a manner that does not result in contaminated solution being spread away from the evaporation pond. However, your letter does not describe what, if any, actions you intend to undertake to make this determination or what steps you will take in the event contaminated solution is spread away from the controlled area at the site.

We suggest that, during the evaluation, the DOE carefully monitor the area around the test site to ensure that contaminated solution is not transported into an unrestricted area. You may also want to consider performing a radiological survey at the completion of the evaluation to document the condition of the area around the evaporation pond to ensure that issues are not raised in the future concerning the radiological status of the area. If, either during the evaluation or after the DOE has completed the evaluation, the DOE determines that contaminated solution has been spread away from the pond area, please inform the NRC as soon as you are aware of the situation.

In accordance with 10 CFR 2.390 of the NRC's "Agency Rules of Practice and Procedure" a copy of this letter will be available electronically for public inspection in the NRC Public Document Room or from the Publicly Available Records component of NRC's ADAMS. ADAMS is accessible from the NRC Web site at <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html>.

R. Bush

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If you have any questions concerning the NRC staff comments, please contact me at (301) 415-6749 or by e-mail at Dominick.Orlando@nrc.gov.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Dominick A. Orlando, Senior Project Manager
Materials Decommissioning Branch
Division of Decommissioning, Uranium Recovery,
and Waste Programs
Office of Nuclear Material Safety
and Safeguards

Docket No.: WM-73

cc: See next page

R. Bush

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