



Department of Energy
Albuquerque Operations Office
P.O. Box 5400
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87115

MAY 11 1981

Ross A. Scarano, Chief
Uranium Recovery License Branch
U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Mail Station 483-SS
Washington, DC 20555



Dear Mr. Scarano:

Enclosed for your written concurrence is the Notice of Intent to prepare an environmental impact statement and conduct public scoping meetings for remedial actions at an inactive uranium mill tailings pile near Salt Lake City, Utah. A copy of the notice was forwarded for publication in the Federal Register after we received phone concurrence from your staff on April 6, 1981. The notice, which reflects the changes requested by the NRC staff, was produced as a result of close coordination among members of our respective staffs. We appreciate your cooperation in completing this step of the NEPA process in a timely fashion, and we look forward to a continued close working relationship with your office on future efforts for the remedial action program.

Sincerely,

Richard H. Campbell, Project Manager
Uranium Mill Tailings Project Office

Enclosure

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Compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act; Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement and Conduct Public Scoping Meetings for Remedial Actions at an Inactive Uranium Mill Tailings Pile near Salt Lake City, Utah.

AGENCY: Department of Energy

ACTION: Notice is hereby given that the Department of Energy intends to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) to assess the environmental implications of remedial action to be performed on an inactive uranium mill tailings pile in the Salt Lake City, Utah, metropolitan area.

SUMMARY: The Department of Energy (DOE) announces its intent to prepare an EIS, in accordance with Section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), to provide environmental input into the selection of an appropriate strategy for the permanent disposal of the uranium mill tailings located at the site of the former Vitro Corporation of America uranium mill processing site. The DOE is currently considering as its proposed action the removal of the tailings to a specially prepared remote site for permanent disposal. In accordance with the Council on Environmental Quality regulations for compliance with NEPA (40 CFR Part 1501), the DOE is serving as the lead agency for preparation of the EIS; the Nuclear Regulatory Commission will participate as a cooperating agency.

The DOE invites interested agencies, organizations, and members of the general public to submit comments or suggestions for consideration in connection with the preparation of the draft EIS. Comments or suggestions to assist the DOE in identifying significant environmental issues and the appropriate scope of the draft EIS are requested. Comments may be submitted by mail or presented at scoping meetings which will be held in Salt Lake City on May 5, 1981, and in Tooele, Utah, on May 6, 1981. On completion of the draft EIS, notice of its availability will be announced in the Federal Register, and comments will be solicited. Comments received on the draft EIS will be considered in preparing the final EIS.

ADDRESS: Written comments or suggestions on the scope of the EIS and requests to speak at the scoping meetings may be submitted to:

Mr. R. H. Campbell
Uranium Mill Tailings Project Office
Albuquerque Operations Office
Department of Energy
P.O. Box 5400
Albuquerque, NM 87115

Envelopes should be marked "DEIS for Salt Lake City tailings pile."

General information on the process followed by the DOE in preparing environmental impact statements may be obtained from:

NEPA Affairs Division
Office of Environmental Compliance and Overview
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Environmental
Protection, Safety, and Emergency Preparedness
U.S. Department of Energy
ATTN: Ms. Carol Borgstrom
Room 4G-064, Forrestal Building
1000 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20585
(202) 252-4600

DATES: Written comments postmarked by May 20, 1981, will be considered in the preparation of the DEIS. Comments postmarked after that date will be considered to the maximum extent practicable. Scoping meetings will be held in Salt Lake City on May 5, 1981, and in Tooele, Utah, on May 6, 1981. Requests to speak at these meetings should be received by Mr. R. H. Campbell at the address above by April 24, 1981.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: The uranium mill tailings at the former Vitro processing site are about 4 miles from downtown Salt Lake City. The mill processed uranium ore for the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, the predecessor of the DOE, from 1951 to 1964; then it produced vanadium until 1968. The plant was dismantled in 1970. The tailings remaining from these operations now rest in piles up to 16 feet high over more than 100 acres of fenced land.

In 1978 the U.S. Congress passed the Uranium Mill Tailings Radiation Control Act, Public Law 95-604. In this Act the Congress found that uranium mill tailings may pose a significant radiation health hazard to the public and directed the DOE to designate processing sites for remedial action to remove this potential hazard. It authorized the DOE to carry out remedial action at each site in cooperation with other Federal agencies and with the states or Indian tribes affected by the action. It gave to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) responsibility for consulting with the DOE over a range of subjects concerning conduct of remedial action, for concurring with the selected remedial action and with any cooperative agreement with a

state or Indian tribe, and for licensing the maintenance of each tailings disposal site after the remedial action is completed. To most expeditiously fulfill its remedial action oversight role, as delineated in Public Law 95-604, the NRC decided to participate as a "cooperating agency" as defined by the NEPA. By participating in this manner the need for NRC to duplicate the DOE efforts in a separate NRC prepared EIS for the Salt Lake City tailings will thus be eliminated. In addition, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) was given the responsibility to set standards to protect public health, safety, and the environment at the tailings sites and the disposal sites. 4.

In accordance with Public Law 95-604, the DOE has designated 25 sites for remedial action. One of them is the former Vitro processing site near Salt Lake City. The DOE has made preliminary assessments of the tailings pile there and of possible remedial actions. The State of Utah has investigated several locations in which the tailings might safely be permanently disposed of and has recommended three of them for analysis by the DOE in the draft EIS. One of these three sites has been identified by the State of Utah as the primary candidate for consideration. The EPA has issued proposed standards governing the cleanup and disposal of inactive uranium processing sites (including the cleanup and disposal of residual radioactive material located at the former Vitro processing site near Salt Lake City, Utah) and, intends to issue final standards by late 1981.

A document describing the preliminary assessments of the Salt Lake City tailings is the "Phase II Title I Engineering Assessment of Inactive Uranium Mill Tailings, Vitro Site, Salt Lake City, Utah" (FBCU-360-00 Revision 1), which is available for public inspection at the locations listed at the end of this notice.

In order to proceed with the selection of an appropriate remedial action, the DOE will prepare an EIS that will analyze the effects of the proposed action and alternatives. After the completion of a final EIS based on the draft EIS and comments on the draft EIS, the plan for remedial action at the former Vitro processing site will be selected, probably in 1982. The remedial action could then begin in early 1983 and be completed during 1987, subject to the appropriation of sufficient funds by the Congress and by the State of Utah to cover the remedial action costs.

PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES: Those issues to be analyzed during the preparation of the EIS will include:

1. Exposures to radiation that the public and the workers on the project will receive from routine operations.
2. Exposures to radiation from hypothetical accidents that release radioactive material.
3. Changes in air quality caused by dust and other pollutants.
4. Effects on soils and mineral resources.
5. Effects on surface and ground waters.
6. Effects on plants and animals.
7. Changes in land use.
8. Changes in noise levels during the actions.

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9. Effects on scenic, historic, and cultural resources.
 10. Changes in population and effects on housing, social structure, services, and economic structure in the communities near the affected places.
 11. Effects on transportation networks, including changes in traffic patterns and volumes.
 12. Expected use of energy and other resources.
 13. Effects of accidents other than effects arising from release of radioactive material.
 14. Benefits of reprocessing the tailings to recover minerals.

The list is not intended to be all-inclusive nor to be a predetermination of impacts.

Analyses of the listed effects will be made for the mill-tailings site, the properties in the vicinity that are contaminated by material from the pile, the disposal sites, the reprocessing sites if any, the transportation routes, and the sites where cover material is obtained. The analyses, made for all the alternative actions, will cover both the time when the remedial action is in progress and the time after it has been completed.

PRELIMINARY DEFINITION OF ALTERNATIVES: The DOE will consider all reasonable alternatives to the proposed action and their environmental impacts. The alternative actions presently proposed for analysis in the draft EIS are briefly listed below. This list may be longer or shorter in the draft EIS itself.

1. : No action. Under this alternative, the tailings would be left in place; no measures would be taken to control them.
2. Removing the tailings and disposing of them permanently below the ground in a natural depression 8 miles north of Clive, Tooele County, Utah. This is the location designated by the State of Utah as the primary site for consideration. There are two options under this alternative. Under option 1 the tailings would be reprocessed by heap leaching at the disposal site to allow the recovery of minerals. Under option 2 the tailings would receive no reprocessing before final disposal.
3. Removing the tailings and disposing of them permanently below the ground in an area 1 mile south of Clive, Tooele County, Utah. Similar to alternative 2, alternative 3 will have the same two options and will use a similar method of analysis.

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4. Removing the tailings and disposing of them permanently below the ground in an area 3 miles west of Dalls, Tooele County, Utah. It has the same two options as alternative 2, and its methods of analysis will be the same.
 5. Stabilization of the tailings pile at its present site. Under this alternative the tailings would not be moved. Instead they would remain at the former Vitro site after treatment to ensure that the pile meets the EPA standards for permanent disposal.

COMMENTS AND SCOPING MEETINGS: The DOE invites all interested parties to submit written comments or suggestions on the draft EIS and to attend two scoping meetings. The purposes of the meetings and of the request for written comments are to provide the DOE and the NRC with as much information from as many viewpoints as possible and to provide interested persons with opportunities to express their views. The DOE will then determine, in consultation with the NRC, the scope of the issues to be addressed in the draft EIS and will identify the significant issues related to the remedial action.

The public scoping meetings will be held in Salt Lake City, Utah, on May 5, 1981, and in Tooele, Utah, on May 6, 1981. The times and places will be announced in local news publications; they may also be obtained from R. H. Campbell at the address given above.

Persons desiring to make oral comments at the meetings should mail their requests to R. H. Campbell at the above address and should write "Salt

the City scoping meeting" or "Tooele scoping meeting" on the envelopes. They should notify the DOE of their desire to speak before April 24, 1981, so that the DOE may arrange a schedule for the presentations.

The DOE will establish procedures governing the conduct of the meetings. The meetings will not be conducted as evidentiary hearings, and those who choose to make statements may not be cross-examined by other speakers. To ensure that everyone who wishes to speak has a chance to do so, five minutes will be allotted to each speaker. Depending on the number of persons requesting to be heard, the DOE may allow longer times for representatives of organizations; persons wishing to speak on behalf of an organization should identify the organization in their request. Persons who have not submitted a request to speak in advance may register to speak at the scoping meetings; they will be called on to present their comments if time permits.

Written comments and suggestions for issues to be addressed in the draft EIS should be sent to R. H. Campbell at the address given above by May 20, 1981. Written comments will be considered and given equal weight with oral comments in the preparation of the EIS.

On the completion of the draft EIS, notice of its availability will be announced in the Federal Register, and the Department of Energy will again solicit comments. Persons who do not desire to submit comments or suggestions during the scoping period may wish to receive a copy of the

draft EIS for review and comment when it is issued; they should notify
B. Campbell at the above address. Persons seeking further information
inquire at either of the addresses given above.

Transcripts of the scoping meetings will be prepared by DOE and made
available at the Freedom of Information Reading Room, Room 1E-190,
Forrestal Building, 1000 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20585,
between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. In
addition, members of the public may inspect the transcripts of the scoping
meetings and other documents now planned for use in preparing the draft EIS at
the following locations:

Freedom of Information Reading Room
Room 1E-190, Forrestal Building
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20585

Salt Lake City Public Library
209 East 500 South
Salt Lake City, Utah 84111

Tooele Public Library
47 East Vine Street
Tooele, Utah 84074

Albuquerque Operations Office
National Atomic Museum
Kirtland Air Force Base East
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87115

Chicago Operations Office
9800 South Cass Avenue
Argonne, Illinois 60639

Idaho Operations Office
550 Second Street
Idaho Falls, Idaho 83401

Nevada Operations Office
2753 South Highland Drive
Las Vegas, Nevada 89114

Oak Ridge Operations Office
Federal Building
Oak Ridge, Tennessee 37830

Richland Operations Office
Federal Building
Richland, Washington 99352

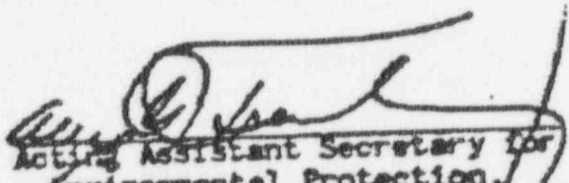
Energy Information Center
215 Fremont Street
San Francisco, California 94105

Savannah River Operations Office
Savannah River Plant
Aiken, South Carolina 29801

Regional Energy/Environment Information Center
Denver Public Library
1357 Broadway
Denver, Colorado 80210

ated at Washington, D.C., this 7th day of April 1981.

for the United States Department of Energy.


Acting Assistant Secretary for
Environmental Protection,
Safety, and Emergency Preparedness