

United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission
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No. 96-151

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
(Tuesday, October 22, 1996)

NRC ANNOUNCES AGREEMENT WITH WYOMING ON CLEANUP
OF ANC URANIUM MILL SITE

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has announced that the State of Wyoming has agreed to complete cleanup of the American Nuclear Corporation's (ANC's) Gas Hills uranium mill site, located about 85 miles west of Casper.

The site, currently licensed by the NRC, includes approximately 550 acres of land. About 140 acres of this tract contain the decommissioned mill site and two uranium mill tailings ponds that are undergoing reclamation. The remainder of the site is semi-arid land that has minimal value for livestock grazing.

A license to conduct uranium milling operations on the tract was originally issued in 1971 to Federal American Partners by the former Atomic Energy Commission. The current licensee and site owner, ANC, announced in May 1994 that it was discontinuing operations and going out of business.

Later that year, the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality told the NRC that it was prepared to complete reclamation of the site and had taken the proceeds of ANC's reclamation bond. Since then, the Wyoming agency has been reclaiming the site, financing the work with reclamation bond funds. As the clean-up proceeds, Wyoming is expected to be entitled to reimbursement from the Department of Energy (DOE) under Title X of the Energy Policy Act.

Under a confirmatory order issued by NRC earlier this month, the NRC will not require the state to perform or pay for any reclamation or monitoring of the ANC Gas Hills site that would exceed funds available either from ANC's forfeited performance bond or from any subsequent reimbursements from DOE, unless Wyoming agrees. If the state notifies NRC that all bond funds and DOE funds have been exhausted, NRC will terminate the confirmatory order.

Wyoming will remediate the site in accordance with an approved reclamation plan. Additional requirements detailed in the confirmatory order include a 6-foot radon barrier cover on top of the tailings piles; radiation monitoring at the perimeter;

an interim stabilization program to prevent dispersal of blowing tailings to the extent possible; and monitoring of groundwater. NRC will continue to inspect the site periodically during remediation.

At the end of satisfactory reclamation, the site will be transferred to the Department of Energy for permanent custody.

Any person adversely affected by the confirmatory order, other than the Wyoming agency, may request by October 28 a hearing on whether it should be sustained. Requests should be addressed to the Secretary, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Attention: Chief, Docketing and Service Section, Washington, DC 20555-0001. The NRC will consider extending the time to request a hearing. Such requests should be made to the Director, Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001, and explain why an extension is requested.

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