



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

REGION IV

611 RYAN PLAZA DRIVE, SUITE 400
ARLINGTON, TEXAS 76011-8064

December 18, 1996

Richard A. Ratliff, Chief
Bureau of Radiation Control
Department of Health
1100 West 49th Street
Austin, Texas 78756-3189

SUBJECT: NRC INSPECTION 040-05593/96-01 IN THE STATE OF TEXAS

Dear Mr. Ratliff:

On November 6, 1996, the NRC completed an onsite inspection at the former location of the American Smelting and Refining Company (ASARCO) facility in Houston, Texas. The enclosed report presents the results of the inspection.

This site was formerly licensed by the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) but was subsequently licensed by your agency before the AEC license was terminated. Therefore, we propose that further disposition of this site be undertaken by your agency.

The inspection disclosed that extensive thorium contamination was present on the ASARCO property immediately behind the former manufacturing facility. We are aware that the site is currently being investigated by the Texas Natural Resources Conservation Commission as a state superfund site.

A response to this letter would be appreciated indicating that either the Bureau of Radiation Control or the Texas Natural Resources Conservation Commission has accepted regulatory oversight of this facility.

Should you have any questions concerning this inspection, please contact Mr. Robert Evans at (817) 860-8234 or Mr. Charles L. Cain at (817) 860-8186.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Ross A. Scarano", is written over a light-colored background.

Ross A. Scarano, Director
Division of Nuclear Materials Safety

License No.: STB-454 (retired)
Docket No.: 040-05593

Enclosure: NRC Inspection Report 040-05593/96-01

Department of Health
Bureau of Radiation Control

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cc w/enclosure:

John B. Richardson, Manager of
Environmental Sciences
ASARCO Incorporated
3422 South 700 West
Salt Lake City, Utah 84119-4191

Minor Hibbs
Industrial and Hazardous Waste Division
Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission
P.O. Box 13087
Austin, Texas 78711-3087

Michael A. Bame, Hydrogeologist
Superfund Investigation Division
Pollution Cleanup Division
Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission
MC-143
P.O. Box 13087
Austin, Texas 78711-3087

Department of Health
Bureau of Radiation Control

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bcc w/enci. to DMB (IE-07)

bcc w/enclosure dist. by RIV:

L. J. Callan
J. J. Holonich, NMSS/DWM/HLUR (T 7 J 9)
J. T. Buckley, NMSS/DWM/HLUR (T 7 F 27)
P. F. Goldberg, NMSS/IMNS/IMOB (T 8 F 5)
F. A. Wenslawski, WCFO
S. W. Shaffer, Region I/DNMS
C. A. Hackney
C. L. Cain
L. L. Howell
R. J. Evans
NMI&FCDB
MIS System
RIV File (5th Floor)

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Department of Health
Bureau of Radiation Control

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