



40-8778

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

October 29, 1996

Ms. Barbara Dankmyer, Resident Manager
Molycorp, Incorporated
300 Caldwell Avenue
Washington, Pennsylvania 15301

Dear Ms. Dankmyer:

We have completed our initial review of your amendment request to store decommissioning waste from your Molycorp York, PA, facility in an interim storage facility constructed at your Washington, PA, site. Conclusions drawn from our review have been based on an evaluation of the following documents, which you submitted for your proposed design:

1. Your letter of January 15, 1996, enclosing conceptual drawings for the temporary storage of the York waste;
2. Your letter of February 8, 1996, forwarding, "Information for Interim Storage of Radioactive Material;" "Molycorp, Inc. Washington Facility License Amendment Support;" and "Molycorp, Washington, PA Site Dose Assessment;"
3. Your report entitled, "Thirty Percent Conceptual Design Temporary Thorium Storage Structure" and;
4. A document provided by your consultant entitled, "Design Basis Document Temporary Thorium Storage Structure, Molycorp, Inc. - A Unocal Company Washington, Pennsylvania Facility."

Our comments are enclosed. Please respond to our comments within 30 days of the date of this letter.

In a telephone conversation with me on October 22, 1996, you stated that the design is being modified to use a different structural material. We are concerned about the delay that such a change will cause. Our review of this amendment must be completed before we can complete our review of the decommissioning plan for the York facility. Therefore, in addition to responding to our comments, please submit a schedule for completing the design and your license amendment application.

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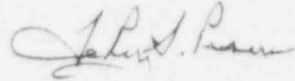
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B. Dankmyer

-2-

If you have any questions regarding our review of your amendment request, please contact me at (301) 415-6701.

Sincerely,



LeRoy S. Person, Project Manager
Low-Level Waste and Decommissioning
Projects Branch
Division of Waste Management
Office of Nuclear Materials Safety
and Safeguards

Docket No.: 040-8778
License No.: SMB-1393

Enclosure: As stated

cc: G. Dawes, Molycorp
J. Yusko, PA-DEP

B. Dankmyer

-2-

If you have any questions regarding our review of your amendment request, please contact me at (301) 415-6701.

Sincerely,

[Original signed by]

LeRoy S. Persson, Project Manager
Low-Level Waste and Decommissioning
Projects Branch
Division of Waste Management
Office of Nuclear Materials Safety
and Safeguards

Docket No.: 040-8778
License No.: SMB-1393

Enclosure: As stated

cc: G. Dawes, MolyCorp
J. Yusko, PA-DEP

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U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION STAFF COMMENTS ON
AMENDMENT REQUEST FOR INTERIM STORAGE OF
DECOMMISSIONING WASTE AT THE MOLYCORP, WASHINGTON, PA, SITE

1. Geotechnical data is not available for the temporary storage site location. In the meeting of February 23, 1996, and during a conference call on June 20, 1996, the licensee stated an intention to perform additional subsurface explorations and testing at the temporary site location. In addition, information about the final grading is lacking. The applicant should provide this geotechnical detail as part of, or as a supplement to, the final design.
2. The final design documents should address the geomembrane design, including an evaluation of the effects of any total and differential settlement.
3. The proposed down-gradient monitoring wells should be located as close to the edge of the storage facility as practical to be of value in detecting releases from the facility. The final design should be revised to indicate the new locations and the justification for the locations.
4. Page 5 of the Design Basis Document states that the site is in seismic zone 1. For the interim storage facility, this requires that the peak ground acceleration (PGA) associated with the Uniform Building Code seismic zone 1 be used in structural and geotechnical calculations. The PGA for the permanent facility will be addressed during review of that structure, if and when one is proposed.
5. Page 6 of the Design Basis Document states that the facility will be located above the existing fill zone, which consists of slag, gravel, spent refractory, cinders, and sand. The total and differential settlement potential and its effects, resulting from the construction of the temporary storage facility, should be addressed in the Structural Design section of this report (page 8).
6. The slope stability evaluation on page 8 of this document should include a seismic analysis.

Enclosure

B. Dankmyer

-2-

If you have any questions regarding our review of your amendment request, please contact me at (301) 415-6701.

Sincerely,

[Original signed by]

LeRoy S. Person, Project Manager
Low-Level Waste and Decommissioning
Projects Branch
Division of Waste Management
Office of Nuclear Materials Safety
and Safeguards

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cc: G. Dawes, Molycorp
J. Yusko, PA-DEP

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