



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

May 15, 2020

EA-16-114

Mr. David Pierce
Closure Manager
Grants Reclamation Project
Homestake Mining Company of CA
P.O. Box 98/Highway 605
Grants, NM 87020

SUBJECT: U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION APPROVAL OF HOMESTAKE MINING COMPANY OF CALIFORNIA REQUEST FOR 120-DAY EXTENSION OF THE DUE DATE FOR CORRECTIVE ACTIONS PURSUANT TO CONFIRMATORY ORDER, DOCKET NO. 040-08903, LICENSE NO. SUA-1471.

Dear Mr. Pierce:

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) reviewed Homestake Mining Company's (HMC) letter dated May 5, 2020,¹ requesting that the May 19, 2020, due date for the submission of corrective actions resulting from HMC's 2018 Self-Assessment² be extended for 120 days until September 19, 2020. Condition 5 of Confirmatory Order EA-16-114³ (CO) states that, "All license amendment requests resulting from this Confirmatory Order will be submitted to the NRC within 60 days of receiving the results of NRC's audit(s)." The NRC staff completed its final audit of HMC's Self-Assessment on March 19, 2020.⁴ HMC provided justification, as discussed below, for the extension request.

In a letter dated April 17, 2020,⁵ HMC had previously requested a 60-day extension and requested due date of June 19, 2020, pursuant to Condition 3 and 4 of the CO, to complete corrective actions identified in the HMC Self-Assessment. Subsequently, HMC submitted the May 5, 2020, extension request and confirmed that the request superseded the April 17, 2020, request.⁶

HMC stated in its May 5, 2020, extension request that the fundamental reason for the extension request was the unique, unprecedented, and unforeseeable special circumstance represented by the current COVID-19 virus with regard to operating the HMC Grants Reclamation Project. HMC indicated that due to the national public health emergency resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent Executive Orders issued by the Governor of New Mexico, HMC implemented mitigation strategies (e.g., self-isolation and social distancing) that serve the public interest during the pandemic by ensuring adequate staff are isolated and remain healthy to

¹ Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS) Accession No. ML20128J233

² ADAMS Package Accession No. ML18248A265

³ ADAMS Accession No. ML17061A455

⁴ ADAMS Accession No. ML19120A145

⁵ ADAMS Accession No. ML20115E399

⁶ ADAMS Accession No. ML20133J910

perform critical job functions. HMC further stated that even with these strategies and revised procedures in place, the COVID-19 pandemic has directly impacted the HMC Site; shutting down some Site operations, dispersing many Site staff, limiting access to files and source materials, and affecting HMC's ability to most effectively communicate within HMC.

HMC stated that as evidenced by the latest submission of Integrated Confirmatory Order Actions Summary Table dated April 8, 2020,⁷ HMC has already undertaken many corrective actions since the CO was initially received in 2017. These corrective actions have included at least 10 submittals requesting changes and/or additions to License SUA-1471, as well as numerous procedure revisions, many of which have been reviewed by NRC staff during regular site inspections. HMC also determined that the requested extension request involves no increase in the amounts, or change in the types, of any effluents that may be released offsite, and that there will be no increase in individual or cumulative public or occupational radiation exposure due to the requested extension.

Based on the information provided and pursuant to Section V of the CO, HMC shows good cause for relaxation of Condition 5 of the CO, and I am granting the extension request to allow the proposed changes and/or additions to the license to be submitted by September 19, 2020.

In accordance with Title 10 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 2.390 of NRC's "Agency Rules of Practice," 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 Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS). ADAMS is accessible from the NRC Web site at: <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html>.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact Ron Linton at (301) 415-7777 or by electronic mail at Ron.Linton@nrc.gov.

Sincerely,

George A. Wilson, Director
Office of Enforcement

Docket No.: 040-08903
License No.: SUA-1471

⁷ ADAMS Accession No. ML20099F534

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DATE: 5/15/2020

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ADAMS Accession No.: ML20134H851***via e-mail**

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