

February 7, 1997

Mr. Walter D. Dabney
Superintendent
Southeast Utah Group
National Park Service
Arches and Canyonlands National Parks
Natural Bridges National Monument
Moab, Utah 84532-2995

SUBJECT: DETECTION LIMITS FOR ATLAS CORRECTIVE ACTION PROGRAM

Dear Mr. Dabney:

Thank you for your letter of January 23, 1997, in which you discuss detection limits reported by Atlas Corporation in its December 16, 1996 report to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. You expressed concern that the detection limits for some constituents were too high and identified the detection limits recommended by the National Park Service for 12 constituents.

The December 16 report was prepared by Atlas in conformance with Condition 17 of Atlas' NRC license which requires Atlas to submit that report annually. The purpose of the report is to document the volume of water pumped out the tailings pile and the mass of constituents removed, not to characterize the leachate. Thus, the report documents that the dewatering system recovered approximately 907,350 gallons of leachate with 259,103 pounds of dissolved constituents in 1996. Sulfate, at a concentration of 25,200 mg/L, accounted for 204,044 pounds; sodium, at 5700 mg/L, accounted for 46,153 pounds; while a minor constituent, nickel, at 0.5 mg/L, only accounted for 4.1 pounds. Constituents that were undetected accounted for only trivial amounts of the mass removed by the dewatering system.

NRC recognizes, that for purposes of characterizing groundwater contamination, lower limits of detection than those used by Atlas in the December 16 report, may be required. If you have any questions, please contact the NRC project manager for Atlas, Dr. Myron Fliegel, at (301) 415-6629.

Sincerely,

/s/
Joseph J. Holonich, Chief
Uranium Recovery Branch
Division of Waste Management
Office of Nuclear Material Safety
and Safeguard

cc: See attached list

Docket No. 40-3453

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DATE	2/7/97		2/7/97	

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