

Mr. Ray Plienness  
U.S. Department of Energy  
Grand Junction Project Office  
P.O. Box 2567  
Grand Junction, CO 81502-2567

February 21, 1997

SUBJECT: SITE OBSERVATION WORK PLAN FOR THE MONUMENT VALLEY URANIUM MILL  
TAILINGS REMEDIAL ACTION PROJECT SITE

Dear Mr. Plienness:

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has reviewed the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE's) March 1996 Site Observation Work Plan (SOWP) for the Monument Valley, Arizona, Uranium Mill Tailings Remedial Action (UMTRA) Project processing site, which was transmitted to the NRC by DOE's letter dated May 2, 1996.

Based on its review the NRC staff has identified the two following comments:

1. DOE is considering five remedial options for the site, including extraction and evaporation; extraction and land application; extraction, treatment, and land application; extraction, treatment, and infiltration; and *in situ* bioremediation. As *in situ* bioremediation is experimental for nitrate and uranium and does not have a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency approved procedure, this option may pose a somewhat greater risk to successful remediation.
2. The SOWP contains no reference to the temporary alternate water supply that was mentioned in DOE's transmittal letter of May 2, 1996.

If you have any questions concerning this letter, please contract the NRC Project Manager for the Monument Valley UMTRA site, Mr. Harold Lefevre, at (301) 415-6678.

Sincerely,

(Original signed by Daniel M. Gillen for)

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

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