



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION VIII

999 18th STREET - SUITE 500
DENVER, COLORADO 80202-2466

Ref: 8EPR-EP

NOV 14 1996

Joseph J. Holonich, Chief
Uranium Recovery Branch, Division of Waste Management
Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards
Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D.C. 20555-0001

40-3453

RE: Revised Rating based on additional
information, Draft EIS, Reclamation of
Atlas Corporation's Moab Mill
Prior Rating EO-2, New Rating EC-2

In response to your letter of October 17, 1996, EPA Region VIII has reviewed the information provided to us by Harding Lawson Associates (HLA) prepared on behalf of Atlas Corporation. This information was discussed in a conference call involving NRC and EPA held August 27, 1996 and a meeting held in our offices on September 24, 1996. A letter summarizing HLA's presentation was then sent to us in a packet dated October 1, 1996.

The water quality data presented by HLA for the area near the mill site leads us to conclude that the water in the Scott Matheson Wetlands Preserve apparently has not been influenced by leachate leaving the mill tailings site. The water quality signatures of samples from wells within the wetlands preserve are typical of either river water or brines from the top of the Paradox Salt Unit which underlies the preserve and are materially different than the water quality signatures of ground water near the mill site. Further, the water levels during low flow periods (as corrected for density differences) indicate that direction of ground flow is remains towards the river from both the mill site and from the wetlands preserve.

Pursuant to our comment letter on the Draft EIS and based on the above information, EPA Region VIII has revised the rating of the Draft EIS to EC-2 which means we have environmental concerns about the proposed action and that additional information as outlined in the remainder of our comment letter should be considered for inclusion in the Final EIS. If you have any further questions on this matter, please contact Lon Hesla or Wes Wilson of my staff at (303) 312-6024 and (303) 312-6562 respectively.

Sincerely,

Carol L. Campbell

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NLPS

Carol L. Campbell, Director
Office of Ecosystems Protection

cc: Dick Sanderson, EPA, Washington, D.C.

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