

April 11, 1997

Mr. Joseph E. Virgona, Project Manager
U.S. Department of Energy
Grand Junction Projects Office
P.O. Box 2567
Grand Junction, Colorado 81502-2567

SUBJECT: EXTENSION OF THE SUPPLEMENTAL STANDARDS AREA BOUNDARY FOR THE
SOUTHERN PACIFIC RAILROAD PROPERTY, GRAND JUNCTION, COLORADO

Dear Mr. Virgona:

By a letter dated February 12, 1997, the Department of Energy (DOE) requested U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission approval of a proposed extension of the southern boundary of the supplemental standards area for the Southern Pacific Railroad property in Grand Junction, Colorado. The NRC staff previously concurred in the original supplemental standards application for the Southern Pacific Railroad (dated January 5, 1995) on April 30, 1996. The staff has completed its review of DOE's February 12 submittal and concurs in DOE's request to extend the supplemental standards area.

The original application concurred in by NRC showed a boundary that ended at the edge of an abutment for a railroad bridge which crosses the Colorado River. DOE has identified additional contaminated material (a two-foot-thick lens of tailings) at a depth from four to six feet, extending under the railroad bridge to near the edge of the Colorado River. The extension area is unlikely to develop into another use and surface gamma has been measured at only slightly above background; therefore, no identifiable health risk exists from leaving the tailings in place.

The basis for approval of the original request for supplemental standards was based on 40 CFR 192.21 (c), the cost of remedial action is unreasonably high relative to the long-term benefits, and the residual radioactive materials do not pose a clear present or future hazard. This criterion also applies to the area of extension; therefore, the NRC staff has no objection to the boundary extension and concurs in DOE's request.

If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Ms. Charlotte Abrams of my staff at (301) 415-5808.

Sincerely,

(Original signed by)
Charles L. Cain, Acting Chief
Uranium Recovery Branch
Division of Waste Management
Office of Nuclear Material Safety
and Safeguards

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cc: S. Hamp, DOE Alb
E. Artiglia, TAC Alb

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