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UNC Church Rock

Comment On: NRC-2019-0026-0007
United Nuclear Corporation Church Rock Project;

Document: NRC-2019-0026-DRAFT-0010
Comment on FR Doc # 2020-25048

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Submitter Information

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General Comment

See attached file(s)

Attachments

Docket NRC-2019-0026 Energy Fuels Comment Letter 5-27-2021



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May 27, 2021

U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D.C. 20555-001

Re: **Docket No. NRC-2019-0026**
Potential Off-site Recycling Alternative for Material from the Northeast Church Rock Mine site

Thank you for providing us with an opportunity to provide comments on Docket No. NRC-2019-0026. Energy Fuels is interested in helping to clean up the legacy of historic uranium mining in the Four Corners Region, with a particular commitment to supporting the efforts of Navajo and Native American communities. We believe our White Mesa Mill located in southeast Utah offers a unique combination of features that can be leveraged to recycle and manage some (or all) of the material from the Northeast Church Rock ("NECR") mine site in an environmentally responsible and permanent manner.

Energy Fuels Inc. ("Energy Fuels" or the "Company") is the owner and operator of the White Mesa Mill (the "Mill"), located near Blanding, Utah. The Mill is the only conventional uranium mill operating in the U.S. today, and it is fully licensed, currently operating, in excellent condition, and in full compliance with all applicable laws and regulations. The Mill also produces vanadium, and we just began production of an intermediate rare earth product.

The Mill can responsibly and inexpensively accept, recycle and dispose of cleanup material from the NECR mine site, including Principle Threat Waste ("PCW"), to the extent such material is comprised of uranium ore remnants, low-grade uranium ore, contaminated soil, and/or other mine waste containing recoverable quantities of natural uranium (together, "Ore Material"). Indeed, we are currently performing a similar service for the cleanup of Rio Grande Resources' Mount Taylor uranium mine in New Mexico, where we have received roughly 40,000 tons of Ore Material to date. The Mill has the added advantage of being located on private land, well off of the Navajo Nation, thereby able to honor the Navajo preference that waste is not permanently disposed on their land.

We would process Ore Material at the Mill similar to any other uranium ore; recover the contained uranium for sale to the U.S. nuclear industry for the generation of carbon-free nuclear energy; and dispose of the remaining material in our existing, state-of-the-art tailings facilities. Further, we have had preliminary discussions with major U.S. nuclear utilities who have expressed an interest in supporting these cleanups by purchasing the recovered uranium.

Reasons to Consider the White Mesa Mill:

- Currently licensed by the State of Utah to immediately accept and recycle the Ore Material.
- Able to process the Ore Material and recover uranium for sale to domestic utilities for the generation of carbon-free nuclear energy; potentially provide a credit to the project cost based on the value of the uranium recovered.

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- Energy Fuels has already sampled the PCW at the NECR mine site, and we have confirmed that we can recover uranium from it.
- Team with extensive experience recovering uranium from a wide variety of sources, including trained managers and staff with expertise in the health, safety, environmental, and regulatory compliance.
- Exceptional track-record of regulatory compliance, safe operations, and environmental stewardship.
- Roughly half of the Mill's workforce is Native American.
- 1.5 million dry tons of existing tailings capacity, plus an additional 3.0 million tons of tailings capacity that we expect to have licensed with the State of Utah later in 2021.
- Current processing capacity to immediately recycle up to 660,000 dry tons of feed per annum.
- All tailings impoundments are built to current, 1,000-year RCRA standards for uranium mill tailings, including a geo-synthetic clay liner ("GCL") and two (2) 60 mil HDPE liners with a 300 mil HDPE geonet leak detection layer between the HDPE liners.
- Currently receiving Ore Material from the cleanup of Rio Grande Resources' Mount Taylor uranium mine for recycling; ~40,000 tons (~1,600 truckloads) received over the past 18 months.
- Excellent track-record of recycling material from under other U.S. federal government agency clean-up programs, such as the Formerly Utilized Sites Remedial Action Program ("FUSRAP") administered by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers ("USACE").
- Because the tailings from processing the Ore Material will be 11e.(2) byproduct material under the Atomic Energy Act, following its reclamation in the future, title to the White Mesa Mill and its tailings impoundments will be transferred to the U.S. Department of Energy ("DOE") following site closure for long term care and maintenance.
 - *Therefore, any risk of long-term liabilities associated with transferring the Ore Material to the White Mesa Mill for processing is virtually eliminated for companies like United Nuclear Corporation (General Electric).*
- Approximately 195 road miles from the NECR mine site to the White Mesa Mill.

In short, the White Mesa Mill currently has existing tailings and processing capacity, and Energy Fuels is prepared to discuss a mutually acceptable arrangement (with additional information on quantities, timing, and material characteristics) for what we believe could be a compelling and competitive alternate solution for much of the NECR mine material, particularly the higher-grade Principle Threat Waste material. Please feel free to reach out to me at cmoore@energyfuels.com or 303-842-5122, if you would like to discuss further. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Curtis H. Moore, VP – Marketing & Corporate Development

Recent Pictures of the White Mesa Mill



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