

These TS changes will not increase the probability or consequences of accidents, no changes are being made in the types of any effluent that may be released off site, and there is no significant increase in the allowable individual or cumulative occupational radiation exposure. Therefore, the Commission concludes that there are no significant radiological environmental impacts associated with the proposed TS amendments.

With regard to potential nonradiological impacts, the proposed amendments involve features located entirely within the restricted area as defined in 10 CFR Part 20. They do not affect nonradiological plant effluents and have no other environmental impact. Therefore, the Commission concludes that there are no significant nonradiological impacts associated with the proposed amendments.

Alternatives to the Proposed Action

Since the Commission has concluded there is no measurable environmental impact associated with the proposed amendments, any alternatives with equal or greater environmental impact need not be evaluated. The principal alternative to this action would be to deny the amendment request. Such action would not reduce the environmental impacts of plant operations.

Alternative Use of Resources

This action does not involve the use of resources not previously considered in connection with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's Final Environmental Statement dated December 1972, related to the operation of the Zion Nuclear Power Station, Units 1 and 2.

Agencies and Persons Consulted

In accordance with its stated policy, on January 5, 1996, the NRC staff consulted with the Illinois State Official, Mr. Frank Niziolek, Head, Reactor Safety Section, Division of Engineering, Illinois Department of Nuclear Safety; regarding the environmental impact of the proposed action. The State official had no comments.

Finding of No Significant Impact

Based upon the foregoing environmental assessment, the Commission concludes that the proposed action will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment. Accordingly, the Commission has determined not to prepare an environmental impact

statement for the proposed amendments.

For further details with respect to this action, see the licensee's letter dated November 3, 1995, as supplemented on November 22, 1995, which are available for public inspection at the Commission's Public Document Room, The Gelman Building, 2120 L Street, NW., Washington, DC, and at the local public document room located at the Waukegan Public Library, 128 N. County Street, Waukegan, Illinois 60085.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 9th day of February 1996.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.
Clyde Y. Shiraki,
*Project Manager, Project Directorate III-2,
Division of Reactor Projects—III/IV, Office of
Nuclear Reactor Regulation.*

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[Docket No. 40-8964]

Rio Algom Mining Corp.; Final Finding of No Significant Impact Notice of Opportunity for Hearing

AGENCY: Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) proposes to amend NRC Source Material License SUA-1548 to allow the licensee, Rio Algom Mining Corp. (Rio Algom), to employ deep well disposal of process waste waters at its Smith Ranch in-situ leach facility as an alternate disposal option for these wastes. An Environmental Assessment was performed by the NRC staff in accordance with the requirements of 10 CFR Part 51. The conclusion of the Environmental Assessment is a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the proposed licensing action.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. James R. Park, Uranium Recovery Branch, Mail Stop TWFN 7-J9, Division of Waste Management, Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555. Telephone 301/415-6699.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

On March 12, 1992, the NRC issued to Rio Algom an NRC Source Material License, SUA-1548, for commercial-scale uranium recovery operations at Rio Algom's Smith Ranch in-situ leach (ISL) facility in Converse County, Wyoming.

The NRC review of Rio Algom's license application is documented in an

Environmental Assessment (EA), issued on January 10, 1992.

Since the issuance of SUA-1548, Rio Algom has deferred commercial-scale operations at the Smith Ranch facility due to the depressed market for uranium. However, Rio Algom has indicated that it plans to commence such operations in the Fall of 1997.

Summary of the Environmental Assessment

Identification of the Proposed Action

The proposed action is an amendment to SUA-1548 to allow Rio Algom to employ deep well injection as an alternate disposal option for process waste waters to be generated at its Smith Ranch ISL facility. The NRC staff's review was conducted in accordance with the requirements of 10 CFR 40.32 and 10 CFR 40.45.

Need for the Proposed Action

Rio Algom requested NRC approval of the proposed action to allow it to employ deep well injection in the disposal of process solutions from various waste streams that would be produced at the Smith Ranch facility. Currently, Rio Algom is required by NRC license to return all liquid effluents from commercial operations to the uranium recovery process circuit or to discharge them to solution evaporation ponds.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action

By this proposed action, Rio Algom is seeking to employ deep well injection to dispose of a variety of process waste streams. These process wastes would be injected at an average of 150 gallons per minute from an injection well drilled to a total depth of 10,100 feet below surface. The wastes would be injected into permeable portions of the Parkman, Teapot, and Teckla formations, at depths below surface ranging from 8700 to 9600 feet. Due to high levels of total dissolved solids, groundwater in these formations has been designated by the State of Wyoming, Department of Environmental Quality (WDEQ), as Class VI water (unsuitable for use).

The Smith Ranch facility is not currently operating. As a result, Rio Algom provided anticipated ranges in concentration of the principal chemical species to be contained in the composite solution. The ranges in concentration of constituents identified by Rio Algom are comparable to concentrations allowed by the NRC at other ISL facilities employing deep well disposal of process fluids.

The NRC staff limited its analysis to a review of the radiological aspects of

the proposed action, in accordance with 10 CFR 20.2002. To avoid duplication of review efforts with the State of Wyoming, the NRC staff relied on the State's analysis of the suitability of the proposed aquifers as injection zones. The WDEQ, on September 29, 1995, granted an Underground Injection Control (UIC) permit to Rio Algom for the construction and operation of a Class I injection well at the Smith Ranch ISL facility.

Based on the nature of the proposed action, the NRC staff considers the potential impacts to the general environment and offsite individuals to be negligible for the following reasons:

(1) Under the State of Wyoming's groundwater classification system, the groundwater in the formations to be impacted is considered to be Class VI (unsuitable for use);

(2) The risk of exposure to the general public from the injected fluids is negligible due to the depth below surface at which process fluids will be injected (approximately 8700 to 9600 feet);

(3) Rio Algom will be continuously monitoring the disposal well to detect and minimize a potential spill on the surface and thereby preclude the release of effluent to the unrestricted environment;

(4) Rio Algom's radiation protection program in place at the Smith Ranch facility will adequately minimize potential exposures to as low as is reasonably achievable (ALARA); and

(5) At the end of the disposal well's useful life, the disposal well system will be abandoned in accordance with the requirements of Rio Algom's Class I injection well permit with the WDEQ.

Conclusion

The NRC staff concludes that approval of Rio Algom's amendment request to employ deep well disposal as an alternate waste disposal option at its ISL facility will not cause significant environmental impacts. The NRC staff also finds that the proposed action is in accordance with 10 CFR 20.2002 and with the NRC "Staff Technical Position on Effluent Disposal at Licensed Uranium Recovery Facilities" (60 FR 27993; May 26, 1995).

Alternatives to the Proposed Action

Since the NRC staff has concluded that there are no significant environmental impacts associated with the proposed action, any alternatives with equal or greater environmental impacts need not be evaluated. The principal alternative to the proposed action would be to deny the requested action. Since the environmental impacts

of the proposed action and this no-action alternative are similar, there is no need to further evaluate alternatives to the proposed action.

Agencies and Persons Consulted

The NRC staff consulted with the State of Wyoming, Department of Environmental Quality, in the development of the Environmental Assessment. In a telephone conversation on February 5, 1996, Mr. Robert Lucht, UIC Program Supervisor, Water Quality Division of the WDEQ, stated that the WDEQ had no objections to the conclusions reached in the Environmental Assessment.

Finding of No Significant Impact

The NRC staff has prepared an Environmental Assessment for the proposed amendment of NRC Source Material License SUA-1548. On the basis of this assessment, the NRC staff has concluded that the environmental impacts that may result from the proposed action would not be significant, and therefore, preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement is not warranted.

The Environmental Assessment and other documents related to this proposed action are available for public inspection and copying at the NRC Public Document Room, in the Gelman Building, 2120 L Street NW., Washington, DC 20555.

Notice of Opportunity for Hearing

The Commission hereby provides notice that this is a proceeding on an application for a licensing action falling within the scope of Subpart L, "Informal Hearing Procedures for Adjudications in Materials Licensing Proceedings, of the Commission's Rules of Practice for Domestic Licensing Proceedings in 10 CFR Part 2" (54 FR 8269). Pursuant to § 2.1205(a), any person whose interest may be affected by this proceeding may file a request for a hearing. In accordance with § 2.1205(c), a request for a hearing must be filed within thirty (30) days from the date of publication of this Federal Register notice. The request for a hearing must be filed with the Office of the Secretary either:

(1) By delivery to the Docketing and Service Branch of the Office of the Secretary at One White Flint North, 11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville, MD 20852; or

(2) By mail or telegram addressed to the Secretary, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555, Attention: Docketing and Service Branch.

Each request for a hearing must also be served, by delivering it personally or by mail to:

(1) The applicant, Rio Algom Mining Corp., 6305 Waterford Boulevard, Suite 325, Oklahoma City, OK, 73118;

(2) The NRC staff, by delivery to the Executive Director of Operations, One White Flint North, 11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville, MD 20852, or by mail addressed to the Executive Director for Operations, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555.

In addition to meeting other applicable requirements of 10 CFR Part 2 of the Commission's regulations, a request for a hearing filed by a person other than an applicant must describe in detail:

(1) The interest of the requestor in the proceeding;

(2) How that interest may be affected by the results of the proceeding, including the reasons why the requestor should be permitted a hearing, with particular reference to the factors set out in § 2.1205(g);

(3) the requestor's areas of concern about the licensing activity that is the subject matter of the proceeding; and

(4) The circumstances establishing that the request for a hearing is timely in accordance with § 2.1205(c).

Any hearing that is requested and granted will be held in accordance with the Commission's Informal Hearing Procedures for Adjudications in Materials Licensing Proceedings in 10 CFR Part 2, Subpart L.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 8th day of February 1996.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission,
Daniel M. Gillen,

*Acting Chief, Uranium Recovery Branch,
Division of Waste Management, Office of
Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards.*

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[Docket Nos. 50-338 and 50-339]

Virginia Electric and Power Company, Old Dominion Electric Cooperative; North Anna Power Station, Units 1 and 2 Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) is considering issuance of an amendment to Facility Operating License Nos. 50-338 and 50-339, issued to Virginia Electric and Power Company et al., (the licensee), for operation of the North Anna Power Station, Units 1 and 2, located in Louisa County.