



**U.S. Department of Energy
Office of Legacy Management
Categorical Exclusion Determination Form**



Program or Field Office: Office of Legacy Management

Project Title and I.D. No.: Install two groundwater monitoring wells at the Bluewater Uranium Mill Tailings Radiation Control Act site near Grants, New Mexico. LM # 10-12

Location: Near Grants, New Mexico

Proposed Action or Project Description:

DOE proposes to install two groundwater monitoring wells—20(M) and 11(SG)—on the Bluewater disposal site using a truck-mounted rotary drill rig. The boreholes would extend to depths of 140 to 280 feet below ground surface and would be completed with a polyvinyl chloride casing that has an outside diameter of 4.5 inches. Water and bentonite would be used for the drilling fluid; if the drilling company requires additives, DOE would require the use of green products. Drill cuttings, which would consist of ground-up native rock with bentonite, would be scattered and left on the ground around each well in accordance with a DOE-approved investigation-derived-waste plan. Over time the cuttings would become a natural part of the environment. No down-hole logging would be required for these wells.

Impacts and activities related to the installation of six similar groundwater monitoring wells on the site were evaluated by DOE as part of LM # 5-12. The impacts related to those wells were found to be negligible. Subsequent to approval of the six wells, DOE proposed two additional wells. Direct impacts were evaluated for the two new wells, and cumulative impacts were evaluated for all eight wells. All impacts were found to be negligible. The same drilling company that is installing the previously evaluated six wells would also install the two new wells.

The proposed activities would not impact any protected resources.

Categorical Exclusion(s) Applied:

- B3.1: Site characterization and environmental monitoring

For the complete DOE National Environmental Policy Act regulations regarding categorical exclusions, including the full text of each categorical exclusion, see Subpart D of 10 CFR Part 1021.

Regulatory Requirements in 10 CFR 1021.410(b): (See full text in regulation)

The proposal fits within a class of actions that is listed in Appendix A or B to 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D

To fit within the classes of actions listed in 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B, a proposal must be one that would not: (1) threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety, and health, or similar requirements of DOE or Executive Orders; (2) require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities (including incinerators), but the proposal may include categorically excluded waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment actions or facilities; (3) disturb hazardous substances, pollutants, contaminants, or CERCLA-excluded petroleum and natural gas products that preexist in the environment such that there would be uncontrolled or unpermitted releases; (4) have the potential to cause significant impacts on environmentally sensitive resources, including, but not limited to, those listed in paragraph B(4) of 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B; (5) involve genetically engineered organisms, synthetic biology, governmentally designated noxious weeds, or invasive species, unless the proposed activity would be contained or confined in a manner designed and operated to prevent unauthorized release into the environment and conducted in accordance with applicable requirements, such as those listed in paragraph B(5) of 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B.

There are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposal that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal.

The proposal has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion. This proposal is not connected to other actions with potentially significant impacts (40 CFR 1508.25(a)(1)), is not related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(7)), and is not precluded by 40 CFR 1506.1 or 10 CFR 1021.211 concerning limitations on actions during preparation of an environmental impact statement.

Based on my review of the proposed action, as NEPA Compliance Officer (as authorized under DOE Order 451.1B), I have determined that the proposed action fits within the specified class(es) of action, the other regulatory requirements set forth above are met, and the proposed action is hereby categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

Tracy A. Ribeiro
NEPA Compliance Officer:

07/19/12
Date Determined: