



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



Program or Field Office: Office of Legacy Management (LM)
Project Title and I.D. No.: Conduct Interim Treatment and Environmental Monitoring at the Tuba City, Arizona, Disposal Site (LM 07-16)
Location: Tuba City, Arizona

Proposed Action or Project Description:

The Tuba City, Arizona, disposal cell is underlain by contaminated groundwater due to onsite uranium milling activity which occurred between 1956 and 1966. The groundwater contaminant plume, which consists primarily of uranium, nitrate, and sulfate, has not migrated substantially from the original site of mill buildings, tailings piles, and tailings ponds. Due to the need to idle the obsolete distillation treatment unit, an interim treatment action for contaminated groundwater was identified by LM and approved by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. The interim groundwater treatment process consists of extracting contaminated groundwater and using the existing system of extraction well pumps and piping for evaporative treatment in the existing evaporation pond. Evaporative treatment returns clean water to the atmosphere as a vapor and segregates contamination in the sediment layer of the evaporation pond. The current interim process can treat approximately 7 gallons per minute (GPM) during the winter and 15 GPM during the summer. The maximum flow rate of treatment is substantially less than the 176 GPM limit of the applicable Categorical Exclusion (B1.26).

A 2-year collection period would gather climate data and test potential enhanced-evaporation methods and performance evaluation reporting. This would capture seasonal variations in evaporation rates, reducing the level of uncertainty in reporting which could arise from collection of data over a shorter period of time. Conclusions and recommendations would then be used as the basis for revision to the Groundwater Compliance Action Plan. Outreach activity would continue to better inform the local community of the disposal site, the source and extent of existing groundwater contamination, and future treatment options.

Categorical Exclusion(s) Applied:

B1.26 Small water treatment facilities (less than 250,000 gallons per day treated): For evaporative treatment of extracted groundwater

B3.1 Site characterization and environmental monitoring: For data collection and evaluation of the interim treatment process

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.

NEPA Compliance Officer:

Date Determined: