

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

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[FR Doc. 98-4486 Filed 2-20-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7590-01-P

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[Docket No. 50-346]

Toledo Edison Company, Centerior Service Company and the Cleveland Electric Illuminating Company, Davis- Besse Nuclear Power Station, Unit 1; Notice of Corrections

In the **Federal Register** issue dated January 28, 1998, beginning at page 4327 (63 FR 4327), two amendment requests were listed, both with application dates of December 23, 1997. For both of these listed requests:

- (1) The attorney for the licensees should be Jay E. Silberg, Esquire, Shaw, Pittman, Potts and Trowbridge, 2300 N Street, NW., Washington, DC 20037
- (2) The NRC Acting Project Director should be Richard P. Savio.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 18th day of February 1998.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Allen G. Hansen,

*Project Manager, Project Directorate III-3,
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Nuclear Reactor Regulation.*

[FR Doc. 98-4488 Filed 2-20-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7590-01-P

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[Docket No. 40-8943]

Crow Butte Resources, Inc.

AGENCY: Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

ACTION: Final finding of no significant impact; notice of opportunity for hearing.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) proposes to renew NRC Source Material License SUA-1534 to authorize the licensee, Crow Butte Resources, Inc. (CBR), for continued commercial operation of its in-situ leach (ISL) uranium mine and processing facility, located in Dawes County, Nebraska. This license currently authorizes CBR to receive, acquire, possess, and transfer uranium at the Crow Butte Uranium Project, which is located approximately eight kilometers (five miles) southeast of the town of Crawford, Nebraska. An Environmental

Assessment was performed by the NRC staff in support of its review of CBR's license renewal request, 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-J8, Division of Waste Management, Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, D.C. 20555. Telephone 301/415-6699.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

At the Crow Butte facility, the ISL mining method involves: (1) The injection of native groundwater, with added sodium carbonate/bicarbonate and oxygen or hydrogen peroxide, into a uranium-bearing orebody through injection wells; (2) the chemical mobilization of the uranium through oxidation and then complexation with the carbonate species; and (3) the extraction of the uranium-bearing solution from the subsurface through a pattern of pumping wells. The uranium is separated from the leach solution by conventional ion exchange methods in the processing facility. The resulting uranium-poor solution is recharged with carbonate and oxygen and returned to the mining zone for additional uranium recovery. This cycle continues until the ore zone is depleted or recovery of the uranium is no longer economically feasible.

The recovered uranium solution is processed further by using ammonia or hydrogen peroxide to precipitate the uranium into a slurry. The resulting slurry is thickened by gravity settling, and then washed and de-watered in a filter press to about 50 percent solids. The filter press solids (cake) are then dried in a natural gas vacuum dryer, to produce uranium oxide, which is commonly known as "yellowcake." The dried yellowcake is packaged in 208-liter (55-gallon) steel drums for storage and eventual shipment to a fuel processing facility.

CBR conducts uranium recovery operations within designated areas ("mine units") of the Crow Butte site; these mine units range between 4 to 16 hectares (10 and 40 acres) in size. A number of well patterns are installed in each mine unit, with each pattern typically including four injection wells laid out in a roughly rectangular shape and one centrally-located pumping (production) well. Currently, CBR is

conducting uranium recovery operations in three mine units and groundwater restoration in two other mine units in which uranium recovery has been concluded. CBR has completed construction of a sixth mine unit but has yet to initiate operations in it.

Summary of the Environmental Assessment

The NRC staff performed an appraisal of the environmental impacts associated with the continued operation of the Crow Butte ISL facility, in accordance with 10 CFR part 51, Licensing and Regulatory Policy Procedures for Environmental Protection. In conducting its appraisal, the NRC staff considered the following information: (1) CBR's license renewal application, as amended; (2) previous environmental evaluations of the Crow Butte facility; (3) CBR's license amendment requests submitted subsequent to its renewal application, and NRC staff approvals of such requests; (4) data contained in required semiannual environmental monitoring reports; (5) results of NRC staff site visits and inspections of the Crow Butte facility; and (6) consultations with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the State of Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality, and the State Historic Preservation Officer for the State of Nebraska. The results of the staff's appraisal are documented in an Environmental Assessment. The safety aspects for the continued operation of the facility are discussed in a Safety Evaluation Report.

The license renewal would authorize CBR to continue operating the Crow Butte ISL facility, such that the plant throughput does not exceed a flow rate of 18,930 liters (5000 gallons) per minute, exclusive of the flow involved in restoring the depleted mine units. Annual yellowcake production will not be authorized to exceed 907,185 kilograms (2 million pounds).

All conditions in the renewal license and commitments presented in the licensee's license renewal application are subject to NRC inspection. Violation of the license may result in enforcement action.

Conclusions

The NRC staff has re-examined actual and potential environmental impacts associated with continued operation of the Crow Butte facility, and has determined that renewal of Source Material License SUA-1534 will (1) Be consistent with requirements of 10 CFR part 40, (2) not be inimical to the public health and safety, and (3) not have long-term detrimental impacts on the environment. The following statements