U.S. Department of Energy
Office of Legacy Management

Finding of No Significant Impact

Ground Water Compliance at the Monument Valley, Arizona, Uranium Mill Tailings Site

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT: The *Environmental Assessment of Ground Water Compliance at the Monument Valley, Arizona, Uranium Mill Tailings Site* (DOE/EA 1313) (attached) assesses two alternatives: the proposed actions for pilot studies and ground water compliance at the site, and the no action alternative. This site is one of four Uranium Mill Tailings Radiation Control Act (UMTRCA) sites located on Navajo Nation tribal lands. The proposed actions will minimize risk to human health and the environment and will require both administrative and field actions, including implementation of institutional controls and grazing management.

The purpose of DOE's actions is to protect human health and the environment, as required by U.S. Environmental Protection Agency ground water standards defined in Title 40 *Code of Federal Regulations* (CFR) Part 192. Ground water in two aquifers (alluvial and De Chelly) at the Monument Valley site is contaminated with residual radioactive materials from historical processing of uranium ore.

The Environmental Assessment was tiered from the *Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for the Uranium Mill Tailings Remedial Action Ground Water Project* (PEIS) (DOE/EIS 0198), which presents a step-by-step approach for determining the site-specific compliance strategy for this site. Tiering from the PEIS is consistent with the concept of tiering described in the Council on Environmental Quality National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) regulations (40 CFR 1508.28).

The Environmental Assessment analyzes the relevant environmental issues at the Monument Valley site, which include ground water, surface water, human health, air quality, wildlife/endangered species, vegetation, soils, cultural resources, visual resources, socioeconomics, transportation, and environmental justice considerations.

FINDING: On the basis of the Environmental Assessment, which analyzes the relevant environmental issues and the concerns of stakeholders, DOE finds that no significant impact would result from implementing the proposed pilot studies and compliance strategies. This Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is pursuant to NEPA, 42 *U.S. Code* 4321 et seq.; the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for Implementing NEPA, 40 CFR 1500; and the DOE NEPA Implementing Procedures, 10 CFR 1021. The proposed action does not constitute a major federal action that would significantly affect the quality of the environment within the mandate of NEPA. Therefore, implementation of the proposed action does not require the preparation of an environmental impact statement.

Signed in Grand Junction, Colorado, this 22 day of March, 2005.

R.M. Plieness
Office of Legacy Management