

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.
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Decommissioning Projects Branch, Division
of Waste Management, Office of Nuclear
Material Safety and Safeguards.*
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**Environmental Assessment Finding of
No Significant Impact Related to
Amendment to Materials License No.
SUB-908 BP Chemicals, Inc., Lima, OH**

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission is considering issuing an amendment to Materials License No. SUB-908, held by BP Chemicals, Inc. (BPC), to authorize the remediation, decommissioning and construction of the mixed waste pond closure project at its facility in Lima, Ohio.

On November 19, 1991, NRC published a notice of Consideration of Amendment to BPC's License and Opportunity for Hearing (56 FR 58406). There was no response to that notice.

*Environmental Assessment Summary
Proposed Action*

The proposed action is as proposed by the licensee in a second revised application dated February 7, 1994, which supplemented the initial application dated August 15, 1991, and the first revision dated February 28, 1992. In this action, BPC is proposing to use onsite disposal, under 10 CFR Part 20.2002, at its facility in Lima, Ohio, to dispose of the mixed waste with concentrations up to the Option 2 limit in NRC's 1981 Branch Technical Position (1981 BTP) on "Disposal or Onsite Storage of Thorium or Uranium Wastes from Past Operations" (46 FR 52061). Materials to be disposed of are currently located in surface impoundments, hereinafter called ponds, that contain sludges contaminated with mixed wastes. The disposal will be in up to three lined closure cells designed and constructed according to the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) criteria.

Need for Proposed Action:

The proposed action is necessary to remediate the existing depleted uranium contamination and to decommission the ponds containing the radioactive wastes. Onsite disposal is proposed to accomplish the objectives of the remediation and decommissioning. Based on the advantages and disadvantages of the five other alternatives investigated, BPC concluded that the 10 CFR Part 20.2002 disposal option is the preferred choice.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action:

The NRC staff reviewed the levels of contamination, the proposed remediation and decommissioning methods, BPC's preferred disposal option, and the radiological and environmental controls that will be used during the remediation and decommissioning. These controls include the as low as is reasonably achievable (ALARA) program, worker dosimetry, a bioassay program for workers, air monitoring, routine surveys, and routine monitoring of both airborne and liquid effluent releases to meet 10 CFR Part 20 radiation protection requirements. Worker and public doses will be limited so that exposures will not exceed 10 CFR Part 20 requirements.

BPC proposed to remediate the contaminated sludge ponds in accordance with "Guidelines for Decontamination of Facilities and Equipment Prior to Release for Unrestricted Use or Termination of Licenses for Byproduct, Source, and Special Nuclear Materials," dated August 1987. BPC also proposed to dispose of the depleted uranium-contaminated mixed wastes in the RCRA-designed onsite closure cells, in accordance with the 1981 BTP. Based on uranium solubility testing of the mixed wastes, the maximum depleted uranium concentration that is acceptable for disposal in the closure cells is 11.1 Bq/gm (300 pCi/gm) total depleted uranium.

The staff also analyzed the radiological impacts to the public from the disposal of depleted uranium-contaminated sludges and soils in the proposed on-site closure cells. Radiological impacts on members of the public could result from inhalation and ingestion of releases of radioactivity in air and in water during the remediation operations, and direct exposure to radiation from radioactive materials at the site during remediation operations. The public will also be exposed to radiation as a result of the on-site disposals in the closure cells. Decommissioning workers will receive doses primarily by ingestion, inhalation and direct exposure during the remediation activities. In addition to impacts from routine operations, the potential radiological consequences of accidents were considered.

The BPC provided an estimate of the dose to the public from airborne effluents to be generated during the remediation activities associated with the pond closure project. During normal operations, the licensee expects airborne

concentrations to be minimal, because the sludges and soils will be handled in a wet state. NRC staff agrees with this assessment.

Liquids discharged to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) permitted deep well injection system will have concentrations less than the EPA proposed drinking water limits for uranium, and will result in doses less than 0.057 mSv/yr (5.7 mrem/yr) to individuals hypothetically, consuming this water.

The BPC performed dose assessments for two of the three closure cells using RESRAD computer code, Version 5.05. The RESRAD computer code estimates radiation dose impacts assuming a resident-farmer scenario, where an individual would live in a residence on the site, grow food, and consume all drinking water from a water well. The NRC staff verified BPC's analyses and obtained similar results to BPC's. These dose assessments include the worst-case scenarios, with the proposed cover over the closure cells assumed to have been removed. The predicted doses are less than NRC's limit of 1 mSv/yr (100 mrem/yr) for radiation doses to the public in 10 CFR Part 20. NRC staff considers that, if a third closure cell is constructed, the dose assessment results of the two closure cells will envelope the dose impacts of the third closure cell.

During the remediation of the waste from the ponds and placement of the waste into the closure cells, workers will receive doses from direct exposure and from the inhalation of airborne depleted uranium. The maximum estimated direct exposure is for workers standing on the contaminated soil from the ponds. The estimated exposure is 4.0E-05 mSv/hr (4.0E-03 mrem/hr). Assuming a 2000-hour work year, the maximally exposed worker would receive an annual dose of 0.08 mSv/yr (8 mrem/yr). The resulting dose is a small fraction of the 50 mSv/yr (5000 mrem/yr) limit for workers (routine occupational exposure) in 10 CFR Part 20.

Based on the above evaluations, radiation exposures, of persons living or traveling near the site, caused by onsite operations, will be well within limits contained in NRC's regulations and will be small in comparison to natural background radiation. The licensee has a radiation protection program that will maintain radiation exposures and effluent releases within the limits of 10 CFR Part 20, and will maintain exposures ALARA.

BPC and the NRC staff also evaluated the radiological impacts from potential accidents. The predicted maximum

exposure to a member of the public (BPC employee not involved in the remediation project) from an accident scenario would be 0.07 mSv (7 mrem) internal exposure. This potential exposure would result when a truck, transporting contaminated soil, tipped over, spread fuel over the spilled soil, and caught fire. The exposed individual was assumed to be standing downwind of the accident at the controlled access area boundary. The calculated dose is a small fraction of the annual dose limit to the public of 1.0 mSv/yr (100 mrem/yr) in 10 CFR Part 20. The NRC staff verified these calculations used by the licensee.

The predicted maximum exposure to a worker from an accident scenario, other than the above truck accident, would be $7.7\text{E-}04$ mSv ($7.7\text{E-}02$ mrem). This is based on an explosion of the pug mill mixer, where the worker was immersed in a "contaminated" cloud of suspended sludge for 10 seconds while leaving the immediate area of the explosion. This resultant exposure is a small fraction of the 50 mSv/yr (5000 mrem/yr) annual exposure limit for radiation workers and would not significantly add to the worker's annual exposure. The NRC staff verified calculations used by the licensee.

Because no wastes are expected to be shipped offsite to a licensed low-level waste disposal site, there are no expected impacts from the transportation or offsite disposal of radioactive materials.

The NRC staff also considered nonradiological impacts and concluded that all such impacts are negligible.

The NRC staff examined the distribution of minority and low-income communities near the BPC site. Based on the data, there is no potential for environmental justice issues because of race, because no minority exceeds 20 percent of the total population. Because the site represents an insignificant risk to the public health and safety, and the human environment, any residual radioactivity left at the site is not expected to disproportionately impact minority or low income populations near the BPC site. The staff concludes that no environmental justice potential occurs at the BPC site.

Alternatives to the Proposed Action

Six alternatives were investigated that resulted in the selection of onsite disposal as the recommended and preferred option by BPC. They are:

- No action;
- Pond water treatment only;
- Disposal at an existing commercial

low-level radioactive waste disposal site;

- On-site temporary storage followed by off-site permanent disposal at a future, commercial low-level radioactive waste disposal site;

- Treatment of the mixed waste to remove the hazardous constituents and disposal of the remaining low-level radioactive waste at a commercial low-level radioactive waste disposal site;

- On-site disposal under 10 CFR Part 20.2002 (BPC's preferred option).

The advantages and disadvantages of these alternatives, are described in the EA.

Conclusions

The onsite permanent disposal under 10 CFR Part 20.2002 (the BPC's preferred option) consists of removing and stabilizing the contaminated material, and disposing of the wastes in up to three closure cells designed and constructed according to the RCRA criteria. This disposal option complies with the provisions of 10 CFR Part 20.2002.

The environmental and public health impacts would be minimized to ALARA standards. No additional lands are required. There will be no adverse impacts caused by off-site waste transportation because no off-site waste transport is involved. Also, occupational exposures will be minimized. The estimated cost for the mixed waste pond closure project is \$6 million, plus a contingency factor of 25 percent.

The NRC staff concludes that there are no reasonably available alternatives, to the BPC's preferred action, that are obviously superior.

Agencies and Persons Consulted, and Sources Used

This EA was prepared entirely by NRC's Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards staff in Rockville, Maryland, and Region III staff in Lisle, Illinois. Review comments were solicited on the draft EA from the Ohio Department of Health, the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency, and the Allen County Combined Health District, Lima, Ohio.

Finding of No Significant Impact

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

Additional Information

For further details with respect to the proposed action, see: (1) BPC's license

amendment application submittals dated August 15, 1991, February 28, 1992, and February 7, 1994; and (2) the complete Environmental Assessment. The documents are available for public inspection at the Commission's Public Document Room, 2120 L Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20555.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 1st day of May 1996.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Robert A. Nelson,

Acting Chief, Low-Level Waste and Decommissioning Projects Branch, Division of Waste Management, Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards.

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Sunshine Act Meeting

AGENCY HOLDING THE MEETING: Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

DATE: Weeks of May 6, 13, 20, and 27, 1996.

PLACE: Commissioners' Conference Room, 11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland.

STATUS: Public and Closed.

MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED:

Week of May 6

Friday, May 10

10:00 a.m.

Briefing on Severe Accident Master Integration Plan (Public Meeting)

(Contact: Themis Speis, 301-415-6802)

11:30 a.m.

Affirmation Session (Public Meeting) (if needed)

Week of May 13—Tentative

Monday, May 13

2:00 p.m.

Briefing by Commonwealth Edison (Public Meeting)

Wednesday, May 15

2:00 p.m.

Briefing on Performance Assessment Program in HLW, LLW, and SDMP (Public Meeting)

(Contact: Norman Eisenberg, 301-415-7285)

3:30 p.m.

Affirmation Session (Public Meeting) (if needed)

Week of May 20—Tentative

Wednesday, May 22

10:00 a.m.

Briefing on Status of NRC Operator Licensing Initial Examination Pilot Process (Public Meeting)

(Contact: Stuart Richards, 301-415-1031)

11:30 a.m.

Affirmation Session (Public Meeting) (if needed)

2:00 p.m.