

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
OFFICE OF RADIATION PROTECTION**

April 25, 2013

TO: Interested Parties, Dawn Mining Company Millsite Closure

FROM: Mikel J. Elsen, Supervisor 
Waste Management Section

SUBJECT: Dawn Mining Company Uranium Millsite Construction of Sixth Evaporation Pond

This memo is to inform you that the Department of Health Radiation Protection Program and Department of Ecology's Water Quality and Dam Safety Programs have reviewed a proposal by Dawn Mining Company (DMC) to construct a sixth evaporation pond at their uranium millsite at Ford, Washington. DMC submitted an application to construct the sixth evaporation pond on November 2, 2012 to Health and Ecology. Following Health's and Ecology's human health risk and environmental review, the agencies have determined that the application to construct the sixth evaporation pond (EP6) meets engineering and technical requirements.

As the Lead Agency under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), Health's review of DMC's proposal to construct a sixth evaporation pond also considers whether the construction of an additional pond involves substantial changes or new information indicating probable significant adverse environmental impacts not adequately evaluated in existing environmental documents. Health has determined that all of the potentially significant adverse impacts for the sixth evaporation pond were previously evaluated in the existing environmental documents.

An Addendum to existing SEPA documents is attached to this memo and will be posted on the Radiation Protection Program's website at <http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/rp/default.htm>. Anyone who is not on the Radiation Protection Program's list for receiving these mailings related to closure of the DMC millsite may be added to that list, or may request copies of these attachments, by contacting Kristin Felis at 360.236.3240, or email at Kristin.Felis@doh.wa.gov, or at DOH Office of Radiation Protection, PO Box 47827, Olympia, WA 98504-7827.

MJE:krf

Attachment: Addendum to Existing Environmental Documents, April 2013

**Dawn Mining Company Uranium Millsite
ADDENDUM TO EXISTING ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS
April 2013**

**Washington State Department of Health
Office of Radiation Protection**

This document is an addendum to the following existing environmental documents:

- **DMC Millsite:**
 - 1991 Final Environmental Impact Statement, Closure of the Dawn Mining Company Uranium Millsite
 - 1994 Supplemental Final Environmental Impact Statement for Millsite Closure
 - 2000 Addendum to Existing Environmental Documents
 - 2009 Addendum to Existing Environmental Documents
 - 2011 Addendum to Existing Environmental Documents

Dawn Mining Company (DMC) submitted an application, November 2, 2012, to Department of Health's Office of Radiation Protection Program and Department of Ecology's Dam Safety and Water Quality Programs to construct a sixth evaporation pond at their Ford, Washington uranium millsite. Following Washington State Department of Health's (DOH) and Ecology's (DOE) human health risk and environmental review, the agencies have determined that the application to construct the sixth evaporation pond (EP6) meets engineering and technical requirements.

STATE ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT

The Department of Health is the designated Lead Agency under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) for proposals associated with DMC's uranium millsite at Ford, Washington. As the Lead Agency under SEPA, DOH's review of DMC's request to construct a sixth evaporation pond must also consider whether the construction of an additional pond involves substantial changes or new information indicating probable significant adverse environmental impacts not adequately evaluated in the existing environmental documents. All of the potentially significant adverse impacts for evaporation ponds were previously evaluated in the existing environmental documents.

The following discussion provides additional information regarding the technical acceptability of constructing a sixth evaporation pond at the millsite.

EVAPORATION POND PROJECT BACKGROUND

The original closure plan for the millsite was approved in 1994. In 1995, as part of implementing the closure plan, DOH and Ecology approved the design and construction of five synthetically-lined evaporation ponds over the footprint of the former tailings areas, Tailings Disposal Areas 1-3. These five ponds were designed for evaporation of process water from milling operations, as well as ground water pumped as part of the groundwater remedial action program. The evaporation ponds were filled with process water in 1995 and 1996, with the peak

volume in the ponds at 550 acre-feet at the beginning of 1997. Evaporation has reduced the volume of process water to between 50 and 100 acre-feet.

DMC must begin decommissioning of Evaporation Ponds 1-5 and initiate placement of the radon cover over the old tailings areas, TDAs 1-3, in 2013, in order to meet the overall milestone for completion of the Final Radon Barrier by 2019. A sixth evaporation pond must be constructed to contain the remaining process water so decommissioning of the existing evaporation ponds and construction of the radon barrier over old tailings areas can proceed.

CONCLUSION

Dawn Mining Company's request to construct a sixth evaporation pond meets all applicable requirements. Construction of the new pond will contain the process water, allow decommissioning of the existing evaporation ponds and construction of the final radon barrier to remain on schedule and be completed by December 31, 2019. In addition, DMC's request does not involve substantial changes or new information indicating probable significant adverse environmental impacts that have not already been adequately evaluated in the existing environmental documents.