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**U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Disposal of Mine  
Waste at the United Nuclear Corporation Mill Site**

**Public Comment Meetings**

**Wednesday, December 2, 2020 –  
4:00 PM (ET) 2:00 PM (MT)**

Event address:

<https://usnrc.webex.com>

Event number: 199 946 2983

Event passcode: UNCDEIS

**Telephone Access**

Phone number: 888-454-7496

Passcode: 7838183

**Wednesday, December 9, 2020 –  
4:00 PM (ET) 2:00 PM (MT)**

Event address:

<https://usnrc.webex.com>

Event number: 199 047 2797

Event passcode: UNCDEIS

**Telephone Access**

Phone number: 888-454-7496

Passcode: 7838183

# **Public Comment Meeting on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Disposal of Mine Waste at the United Nuclear Corporation Mill Site**

December 2, 2020

December 9, 2020

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# Opening Remarks

John Tappert, Director  
Division of Rulemaking, Environmental and  
Financial Support

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## Meeting Overview

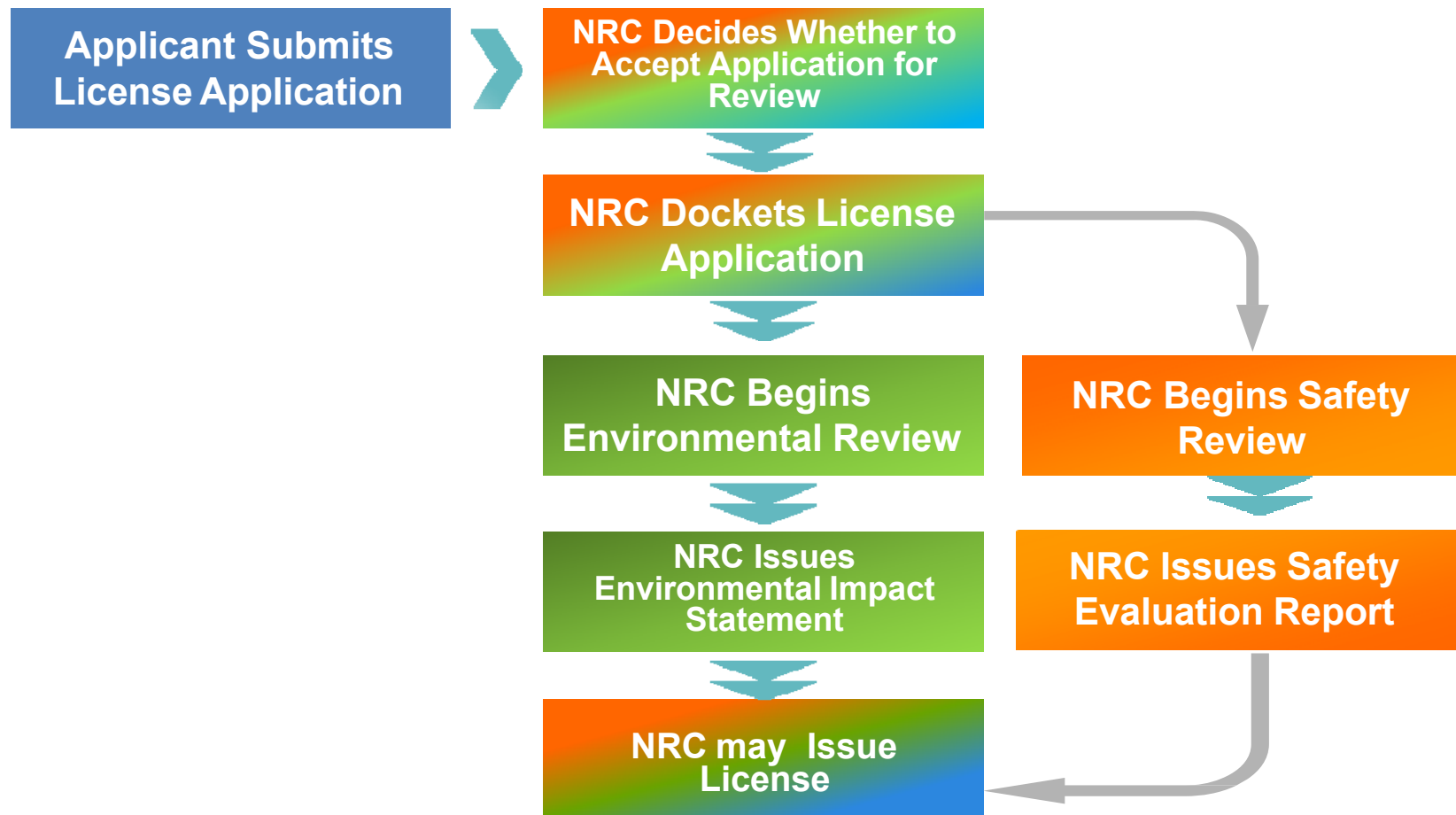
- NRC's Review Process
- Overview of UNC's License Amendment Application
- Public Scoping Comments
- NRC's Environmental Review Results
- Information Resources and Ways to Comment
- Public Comments

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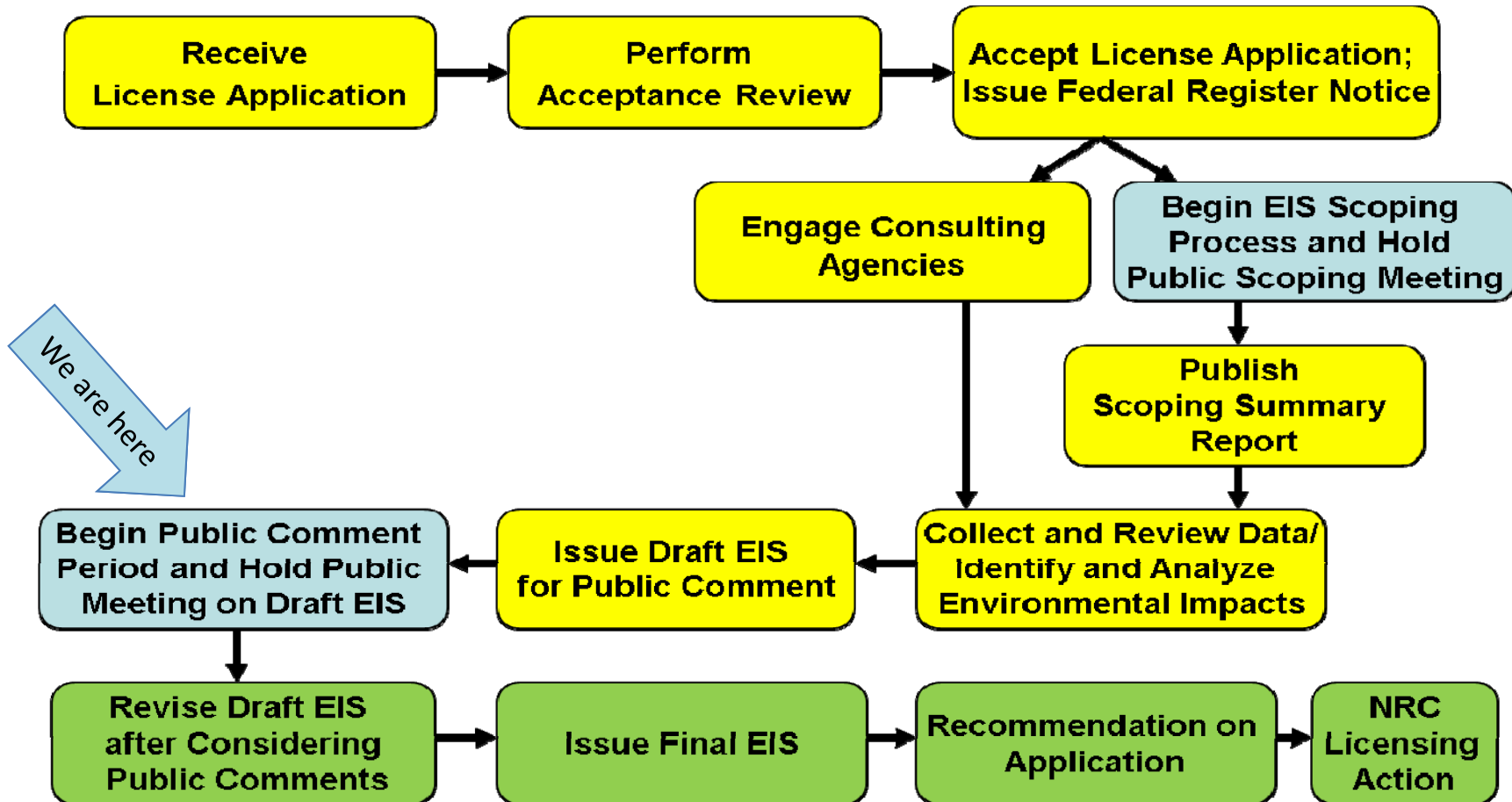
## **Purpose of the Meeting**

To receive comments  
on the Draft  
Environmental Impact  
Statement for the  
UNC Mill Site License  
Amendment  
Application

# NRC's Review Process



# Environmental Review Process

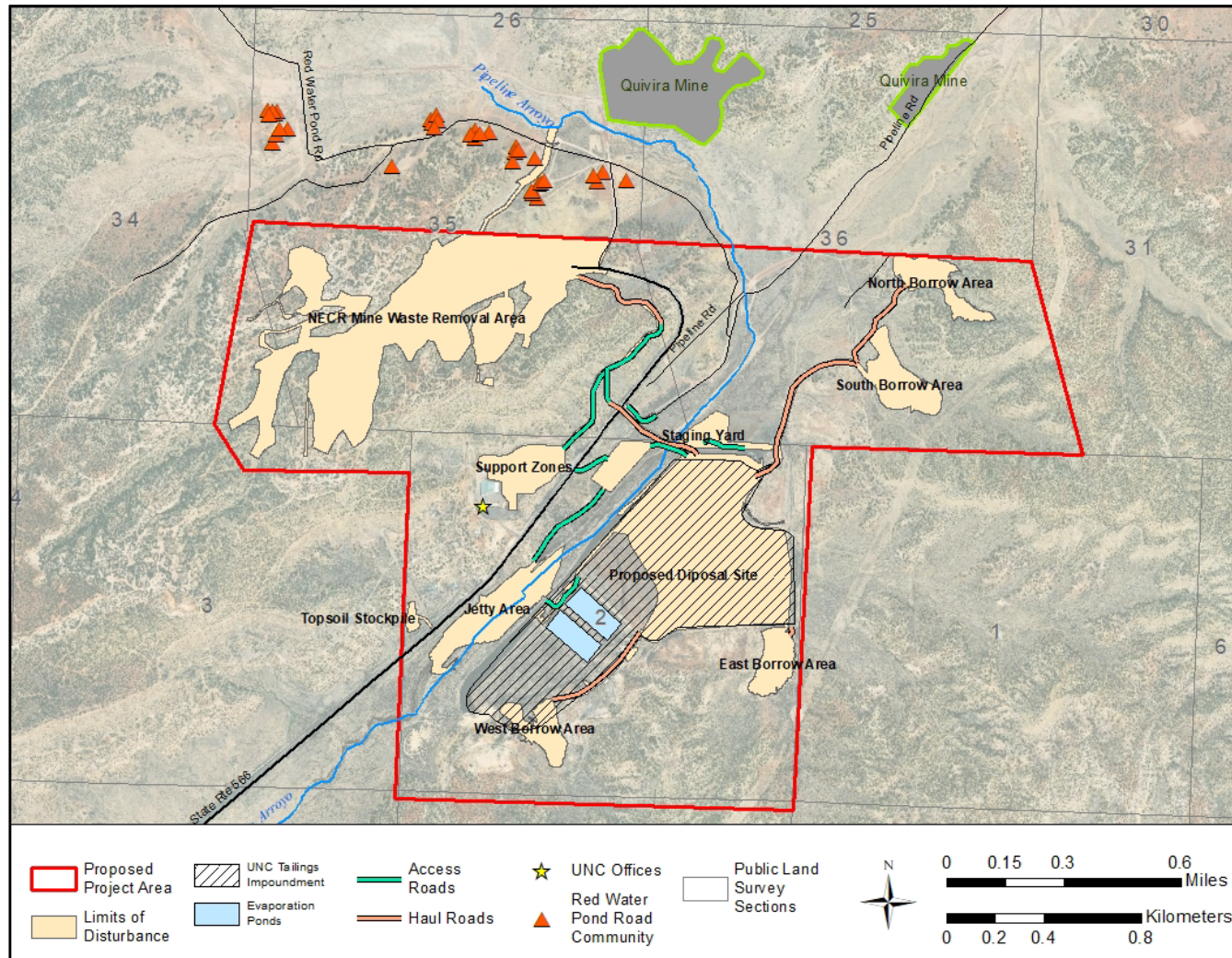


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# License Amendment Application

- United Nuclear Corporation (UNC)/General Electric (GE) seeking to amend its NRC Source Material License (SUA-1475) for the UNC mill site
- If approved, would allow UNC/GE to transfer approximately 1,000,000 cubic yards of mine waste from the North East Church Rock mine site to the existing tailings impoundment at the mill site

# Project Location



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# Scoping Process

- **Scoping Period**
  - February 8, 2019 – April 19, 2019
  - In-person meetings held in Gallup, NM (March 2019)
- **Scoping Summary Report**
  - <https://www.nrc.gov/docs/ML1933/ML19338E254.pdf>
- **Comments**
- **Transportation**
  - Volume of trucks crossing NM Highway 566 (frequent road closures)
- **Surface Water**
  - Downstream migration of radiological waste from the potential undercutting of the tailings impoundment (Pipeline Arroyo)
- **Environmental Justice**
  - Concerns that the proposed action represents an environmental injustice to minority or low-income populations

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# EIS Phases

- EIS evaluates impacts of three phases of the project
  - Construction
    - Surface disturbing activities, including excavation
  - Transfer
    - Loading and transport of waste from mine to mill
  - Closure
    - Reclamation and revegetation of disturbed areas including the evapotranspiration (ET) cover

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# Proposed Action and Alternatives

- Proposed action
- No-action alternative
  - NRC would not approve the license amendment request
- Secondary alternatives
  - Conveyor system instead of hauling waste via truck
  - Cover material from Jetty Area instead of the borrow areas

# Results of NRC's Environmental Review

| RESOURCE          | IMPACT EVALUATION                                                   |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Land Use          | SMALL                                                               |
| Transportation    | SMALL TO MODERATE                                                   |
| Geology and Soils | SMALL                                                               |
| Surface Water     | SMALL TO MODERATE                                                   |
| Groundwater       | SMALL                                                               |
| Ecology           | SMALL (wildlife)<br>SMALL TO MODERATE (vegetation)                  |
| Air Quality       | SMALL (greenhouse gases)<br>SMALL TO MODERATE (nongreenhouse gases) |

## ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT LEVELS

**SMALL** – Environmental effects are not detectable or are so minor that they will neither destabilize nor noticeably alter any important attribute of the resource.

**MODERATE** – Environmental effects are sufficient to alter noticeably, but not to destabilize, important attributes of the resource.

**LARGE** – Environmental effects are clearly noticeable and are sufficient to destabilize important attributes of the resource.

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# Results of NRC's Environmental Review

| RESOURCE                       | IMPACT EVALUATION                                         |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| Noise                          | MODERATE                                                  |
| Historic and Cultural          | SMALL to LARGE                                            |
| Visual and Scenic              | MODERATE                                                  |
| Socioeconomic                  | SMALL                                                     |
| Environmental Justice          | Disproportionately high and adverse environmental impacts |
| Public and Occupational Health | SMALL                                                     |
| Waste Management               | SMALL                                                     |

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# Impact Evaluation

## Environmental Justice

- Analysis of the human health and environmental impacts on low-income and minority populations
- Region of Influence (ROI), 20 miles from site including all of McKinley County
- Many of the block groups in the ROI are potentially affected minority populations and or low-income
- Historic mill operations
  - Dam failure
  - Groundwater contamination (ongoing corrective action plan)
- Closest communities to site are primarily Navajo, who may be impacted by
  - Traffic
  - Dust
  - Noise

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# Impact Evaluation

## Water Resources

- Stormwater runoff and resulting erosion
- Stabilization work in Pipeline Arroyo (Jetty Area) to address potential future undercutting near existing tailings impoundment
- Improvements to stormwater drainage in existing drainage channel

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# Impact Evaluation

## Historic and Cultural Resources

- 5 sites recommended as eligible for the National Register Historic Places
- Developing a programmatic agreement in coordination with EPA, Navajo Nation, and the New Mexico Historic Preservation Office

## Ecological Resources

- No threatened or endangered species affected

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# Information Resources

- Draft Environmental Impact Statement
  - <https://www.nrc.gov/docs/ML2028/ML20289A621.pdf>
- Reader's Guide
  - <https://www.nrc.gov/docs/ML2029/ML20295A709.pdf>
- Application material and NRC project website
  - <https://www.nrc.gov/info-finder/decommissioning/uranium/united-nuclear-corporation-unc-.html>

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## SUBMIT COMMENTS BY **DECEMBER 28, 2020**

- **Oral comments at this meeting**
- **E-mail comments to:**  
[UNC-ChurchRockEIS.resource@nrc.gov](mailto:UNC-ChurchRockEIS.resource@nrc.gov)
- **Leave Voicemail at:** 888-672-3425
- **Federal Rulemaking Web Site:** Go to <https://www.regulations.gov/> and search for Docket ID **NRC-2019-0026**.
- **Mail comments to:** Office of Administration, Mail Stop:TWFN-7-A60M, ATTN: Program Management, Announcements and Editing Staff, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001

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# Public Comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement