

CHURCH ROCK LICENSE AMENDMENT PUBLIC COMMENT MEETING

WILL BEGIN SHORTLY...

Technical contact:
Christine.Pineda@nrc.gov

- Public Meeting Slides:
- ML21112A279
- Please log into both the webinar and the bridgeline. Visuals will be through WebEx, and audio will be through the bridgeline.
- <https://usnrc.webex.com/>
Event: 199 731 8045
- Passcode: UNCDEIS
- Toll Free Bridgeline: 888-454-7496
- Passcode: 7838183 then #

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

**Thursday, April 29, 2021—
6:00 PM (MT)/8:00 PM (ET)**

Agenda

- Introductions and purpose
- NRC's Role and Process
- UNC License Amendment request
- Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Results
- How to comment on the Draft EIS
- Public Questions on NRC's license amendment review
- Public Comments on the Draft EIS

Introductions

- Kevin Coyne (Opening Remarks)
- Ashley Waldron (Environmental Review)
- James Smith (Safety Review)
- Doug Mandeville (Safety Review)
- Joan Olmstead (Facilitator)
- Lance Rakovan (Facilitator)
- Joanna Manygoats (Navajo Interpreter)

Meeting Logistics

- Meeting visuals available through WebEx
- Meeting audio is through the brideline
- Participants are in listen-only mode until the question and answer period. The operator will open phone lines during this time.
- Today's meeting is a comment gathering meeting. Public participation and comments are sought during specific points during the meeting.
- Meeting is being recorded and transcribed
- No regulatory decisions will be made at today's meeting

Background – United Nuclear Corporation Mill Site

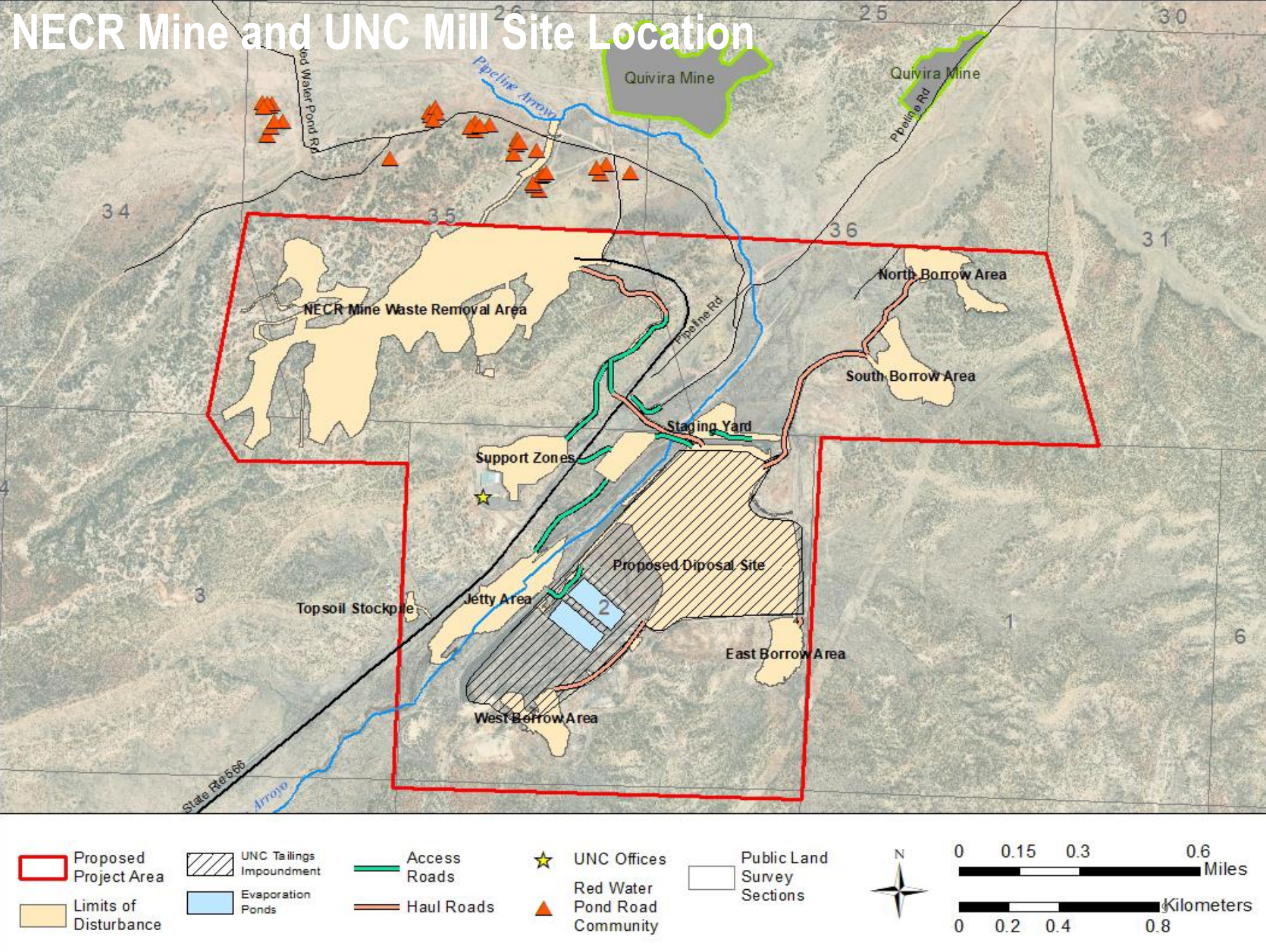
- Mill operated from 1977-1982 under State of New Mexico license
- Milling operations produced waste materials called tailings
- 1979 tailings impoundment dam failure released 94 million gallons of mill tailings liquids into the Pipeline Arroyo
- NRC oversight began in 1986

Background – Northeast Church Rock Mine Site

- Northeast Church Rock (NECR) mine is one of the largest abandoned mines on the Navajo Nation
- Priority for cleanup due to the location of residents living nearby
- 2005 - Navajo Nation requested USEPA lead for cleanup at NECR mine
- USEPA 2011 decision selecting cleanup plan to remove NECR mine waste and place most of the waste on mill site
 - Waste above 200 picocuries/g of radium-226 or 500 mg/kg of uranium would be separated and disposed of at another licensed facility (i.e. not at the mill site)
- USEPA 2013 decision for the mill to accept the mine waste at the mill site (Region 6 - who oversees groundwater cleanup at the site)

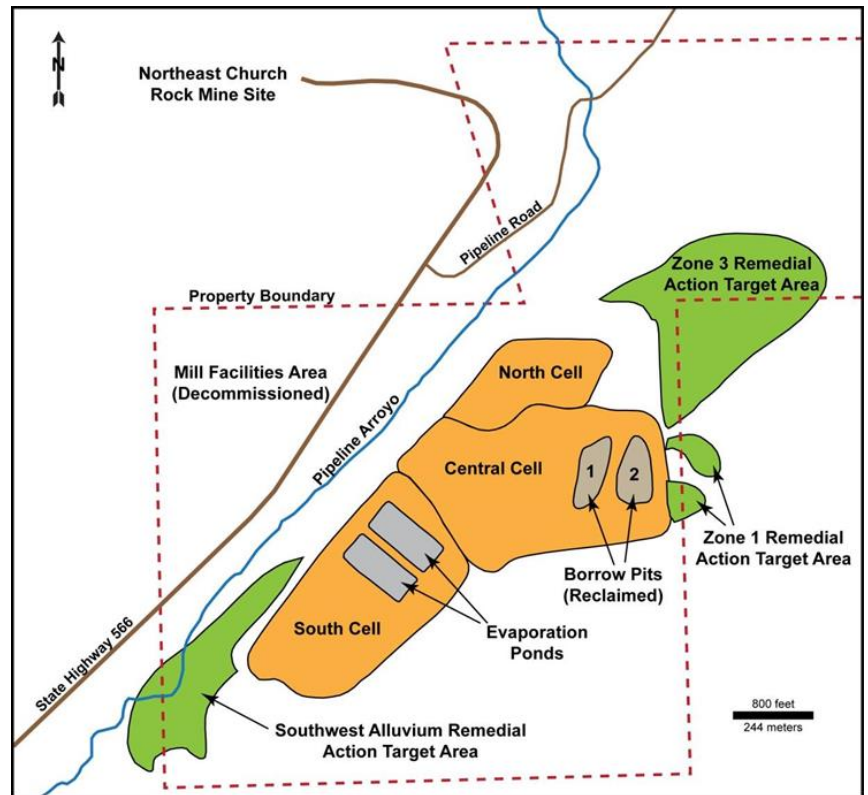
Current site environment

- Mill site is on privately owned land
- Mine site is on Navajo trust land
- NM Highway 566 is a two-lane highway that provides primary access to the sites
- 34 occupied homesites within 2 miles
- Pipeline Arroyo is a dry streambed that fills with water after rains



UNC Mill Site

- Tailings from milling operations are stored in North, Central, and South cells
- Tailings are covered by a radon barrier
- Two evaporation ponds used for the ongoing ground-water cleanup activities
- MOU between NRC and EPA for groundwater correction action plan



License Amendment Request

- United Nuclear Corporation (UNC)/General Electric (GE) is seeking to amend its NRC License for the UNC mill site
- If approved, would allow UNC/GE to place approximately 1,000,000 cubic yards of mine waste from the Northeast Church Rock (NECR) mine site onto the existing tailings impoundment at the mill site
- UNC's request and NRC review do not include the higher concentration waste. Higher concentration waste would be separated and not placed at the Mill Site. EPA would identify an appropriate licensed facility to take this waste

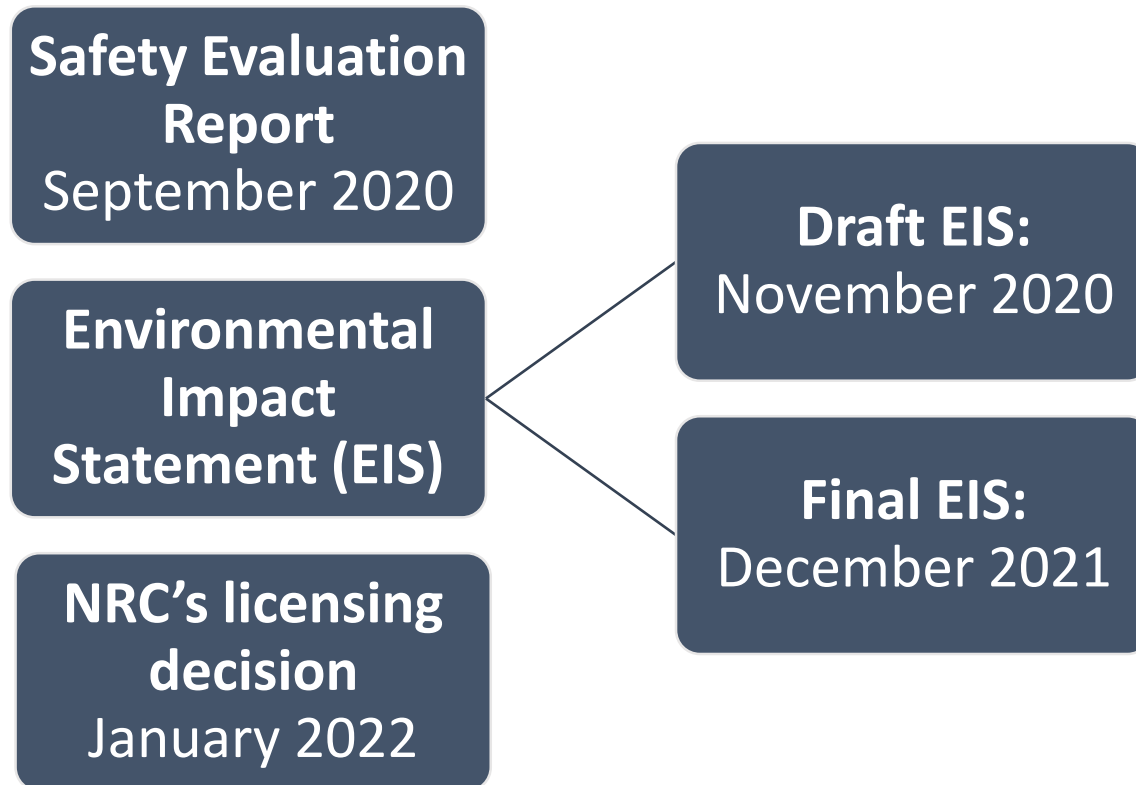


Looking east across the NRC-licensed Mill Tailings Impoundment

NRC's role

- Jurisdiction at the UNC mill site
- Authority to approve or deny license amendment request
- Evaluating whether the proposal to move the mine waste to the mill site can be done safely and how the environment would be affected
- No authority at the NECR mine site
- No role in the remedy selection (location) for the cleanup of the NECR mine

NRC's Review Process



Environmental Impact Statement

- Required under National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
- Evaluate and discuss impacts to the environment
- Action before the NRC is either approve or deny the license amendment request

Chapter 1 – Introduction

Chapter 2 – Proposed Action and Alternatives

Chapter 3 – Affected Environment (current site conditions)

Chapter 4 – Impacts

Chapter 5 – Cumulative Impacts

Chapter 6 – Mitigation Measures

Proposed Action

- Amend NRC license to allow the 1,000,000 cubic yards of mine waste to be placed on the mill site tailings impoundment for permanent disposal
- Waste consists of soil, waste rock, mine debris, and vegetation
- Transferred by truck
- Cover material obtained from areas onsite
- Pipeline Arroyo stabilized using a riprap (rock) chute to replace current rock jetty

EIS Alternatives

No-Action

- NRC would not approve the license amendment request
- Evaluation assumes waste would remain in place for approximately 10 years before EPA selects another remedy

Secondary Alternatives

Same as proposed action but include modifications to specific activities

- 1) Conveyor system to transfer the waste
- 2) Cover material obtained from Jetty Area

Impact Evaluation

- EIS evaluates impacts for three phases of the proposed 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 cover
- Most noticeable impacts, such as noise and transportation impacts would occur during the anticipated 3.5 years of construction and transfer and would then stop

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) SMALL TO MODERATE (vegetation)
Air Quality	SMALL (greenhouse gases) SMALL TO MODERATE (nongreenhouse gases)

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

Transportation Impacts

- Increased traffic, during construction traffic (near haul road crossing) expected to increase by 68 percent
- Construction of haul roads (one crossing highway 566)
- 280 truck trips per day, or 40 trips per hour
- Road closures limited to 15 minutes or less
- UNC/GE would install a temporary traffic light system at the Highway 566 crossing

Noise Impacts

- Impacts from the use of construction equipment and from excavation activities
- Increased traffic would also contribute to increased noise levels
- Closest noise receptors are residents of the Red Water Pond Road community located adjacent to mine site

Surface Water Impacts

- Impacts to surface waters during project activities may result from 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 on the mill site

Air Quality Impacts

- Dust generated from vehicle travel on unpaved roads
- Wind erosion in disturbed areas
- Emissions from mobile sources and construction equipment
- UNC proposed measures in its application for controlling dust
 - Maximum speed limit of 20 mph
 - Spraying water on haul roads, excavation areas, and placement areas
 - Covering trucks or wetting stockpiles
 - Factor wind conditions into work activities

Historic and Cultural Resources and Ecological Resources

Historic and Cultural Resources

- Cultural resource sites identified within the limits of disturbance and recommended as eligible for the National Register Historic Places
 - 4 sites on the mine site; 1 site on the mill site
- Programmatic agreement being developed in coordination with US EPA, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Navajo Nation Tribal Historic Preservation Office, and the New Mexico Historic Preservation Office, and United Nuclear Corporation
- Agreement describes procedures to ensure protection of the identified sites and that proper protocols are followed

Ecological Resources

- No threatened or endangered species affected

Environmental Justice

- Disproportionately high and adverse environmental impacts on minority or low-income populations
- Impacted by historic mining and milling operations
- Closest communities to site are primarily Navajo could be impacted by traffic, dust, and noise
- No adverse human health effects expected from the proposed project

Information Resources

Draft Environmental Impact Statement

<https://www.nrc.gov/docs/ML2028/ML20289A621.pdf>

Reader's Guide

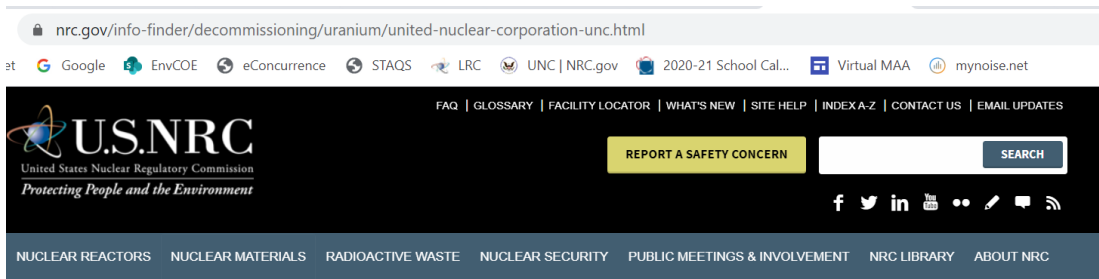
<https://www.nrc.gov/docs/ML2029/ML20295A709.pdf>

Application material and NRC project website

<https://www.nrc.gov/info-finder/decommissioning/uranium/united-nuclear-corporation-unc-.html>

SUBMIT COMMENTS ON DRAFT EIS BY MAY 27, 2021

- **Oral comments at this meeting**
- **E-mail comments to:**
UNC-ChurchRockEIS.resource@nrc.gov
- **Leave a (toll-free) 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



<https://www.nrc.gov/info-finder/decommissioning/uranium/united-nuclear-corporation-unc.html>

Home ▶ Facility Locator ▶ Decommissioning Sites by Location or Name ▶ Uranium Recovery Sites

United Nuclear Corporation

1.0 Site Identification

Type of Site:	Uranium Recovery Facility
Location:	Gallup, NM
License No.:	SUA-1475
Docket No.:	40-8907
License Status:	Possession Only License
Safety Review Contact:	James Smith
Environmental Review Contact:	Ashley Waldron

2.0 Site Status Summary

Related Information

Application Documents

Acceptance Letter

Draft EIS Public Comment and Meetings

[rc.gov/info-finder/decommissioning/uranium/united-nuclear-corporation-unc-public-mtgs.html](https://www.nrc.gov/info-finder/decommissioning/uranium/united-nuclear-corporation-unc-public-mtgs.html)



Home ▶ Facility Locator ▶ Decommissioning Sites by Location or Name ▶ Uranium Recovery Sites ▶ United Nuclear Corporation

United Nuclear Corporation – Draft EIS Public Comment and Meetings

Submit Comments by May 27, 2021

The draft EIS is available for public comment. Comments may be accompanied by additional relevant information or supporting data. Please specify the report number NUREG-2243 in your comments and send them by May 27, 2021.

You may submit comments by any one of the following methods. Please include Docket ID NRC-2019-0026 in the subject line of your comments. Comments submitted in writing or in electronic form will be posted on the NRC website and on the Federal rulemaking website [\(E-11\)](#).

Federal Rulemaking Website: Go to the Federal rulemaking website [\(E-11\)](#) and search for documents filed under Docket ID NRC-2019-0026.

Mail comments to: Office of Administration, Mail Stop: TWFN-T-A60M, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001, ATTN: Program Management, Announcements and Editing Staff.

Related Information

Draft EIS

Reader's Guide

Scoping Summary

<https://www.nrc.gov/info-finder/decommissioning/uranium/united-nuclear-corporation-unc-public-mtgs.html>

Upcoming dates

Draft EIS Comment Period Ends	May 27, 2021
Final EIS	December 2021
Revised SER	January 2022
License Amendment Decision	January 2022

NRC Project Contacts

Ashley Waldron

Environmental Project Manager

Ashley.Waldron@nrc.gov

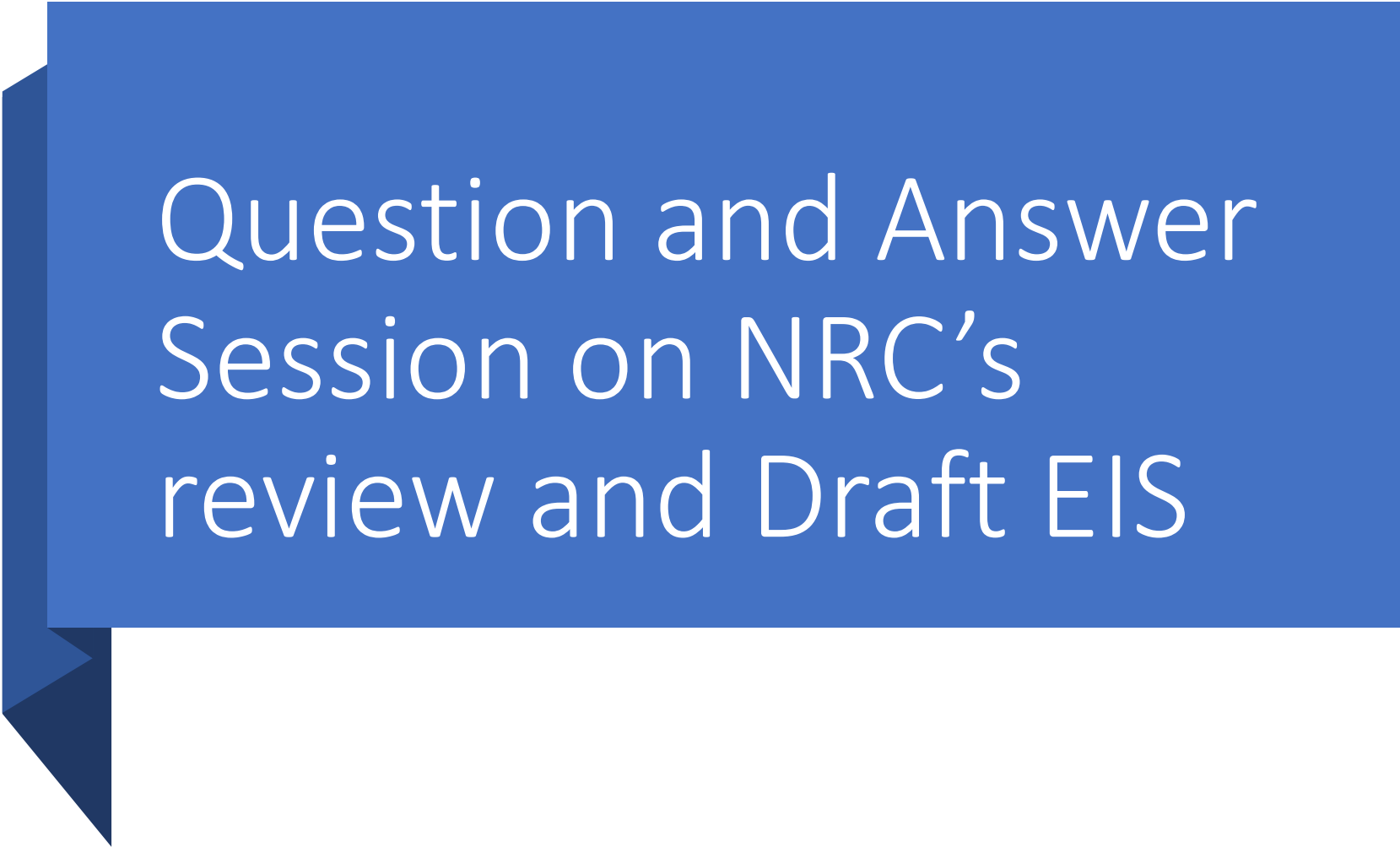
301-415-7317

James Smith

Safety Project Manager

James.Smith@nrc.gov

301-415-6103



Question and Answer Session on NRC's review and Draft EIS

SUBMIT COMMENTS ON DRAFT EIS BY MAY 27, 2021

- **Oral comments at this meeting**
- **E-mail comments to:**
UNC-ChurchRockEIS.resource@nrc.gov
- **Leave a (toll-free) 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