


EPA Will Be Reviewing and Potentially Revising its Health and Environmental Standards for Uranium and Thorium Milling Facilities

June 30, 2009 – The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will be reviewing and potentially revising its regulations for uranium and thorium milling to bring them up-to-date. The regulations now in effect, 40 CFR Part 192, were originally issued in 1983 under the authority of the Uranium Mill Tailings Radiation Control Act (UMTRCA), and last revised in 1995. They establish standards for protection of the public health, safety, and the environment from radiological and nonradiological hazards associated with uranium and thorium ore processing, possession, transfer, and disposal of resulting waste materials. The final cross-media standards must be adopted by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and, subsequently, their Agreement States, as well as the Department of Energy.

EPA will be reviewing all of its standards in the existing regulations, potentially revising them to take into account:

- changes in uranium industry technologies (such as utilization of the In-Situ Leaching recovery process as the principal current technology for extracting uranium) and their potential environmental impacts,
- revisions in EPA drinking and groundwater protection standards,
- judicial decisions concerning the existing regulations,
- issues relating to environmental justice, Tribal, and low-income populations,
- updated dose and risk factors, and scenarios, for assessing radiological and non-radiological risk,
- facilities proposed in states outside existing uranium mining and milling areas,
- costs and benefits of possible revisions.

To ensure an open and transparent rulemaking process, EPA will develop a Web site with postings of relevant documents, notices of opportunities for public input to the process, and notices of meetings at which the proposal may be discussed. Members of the public interested in this issue should visit <http://www.epa.gov/radiation/tenorm/> and sign up to receive notification of changes to the page at the envelope icon. ( [Get e-mail updates when this information changes.](#))