



# NRC NEWS

## U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Office of Public Affairs Telephone: 301/415-8200

Washington, D.C. 20555-0001

E-mail: [opa@nrc.gov](mailto:opa@nrc.gov)

Site: <http://www.nrc.gov>

---

No. 07-129

October 4, 2007

### **NRC RECEIVES FIRST APPLICATION IN NEARLY TWO DECADES FOR NEW URANIUM RECOVERY OPERATION**

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has received an application from Energy Metals Corp. US to construct and operate an in-situ uranium recovery facility at Moore Ranch in Campbell County, Wyo. It is the first application for a new uranium recovery facility submitted to the NRC since 1988.

The application, submitted Oct. 3, will soon be available on the NRC Web site at this address: <http://www.nrc.gov/info-finder/materials/uranium/>. The NRC staff is currently reviewing the application to determine whether it contains sufficient information to begin detailed environmental and safety reviews. If the application is deemed acceptable, the agency will formally docket it and publish a notice of opportunity to request an adjudicatory hearing.

“In addition to the first applications for new reactors in decades, this application for a new uranium recovery facility is a further indicator that the nuclear renaissance is real,” NRC Chairman Dale E. Klein said. “The NRC is prepared to meet the challenge of conducting these license reviews in a timely and efficient manner.”

Existing uranium recovery facilities have indicated interest in resuming and expanding operations, and based on projections from industry, the NRC is expecting at least 15 applications for new facilities – including in-situ operations and conventional uranium mills – over the next three years.

Energy Metals Corp. US, based in Edmund, Okla., is a subsidiary of Energy Metals Corp. of Vancouver, British Columbia.

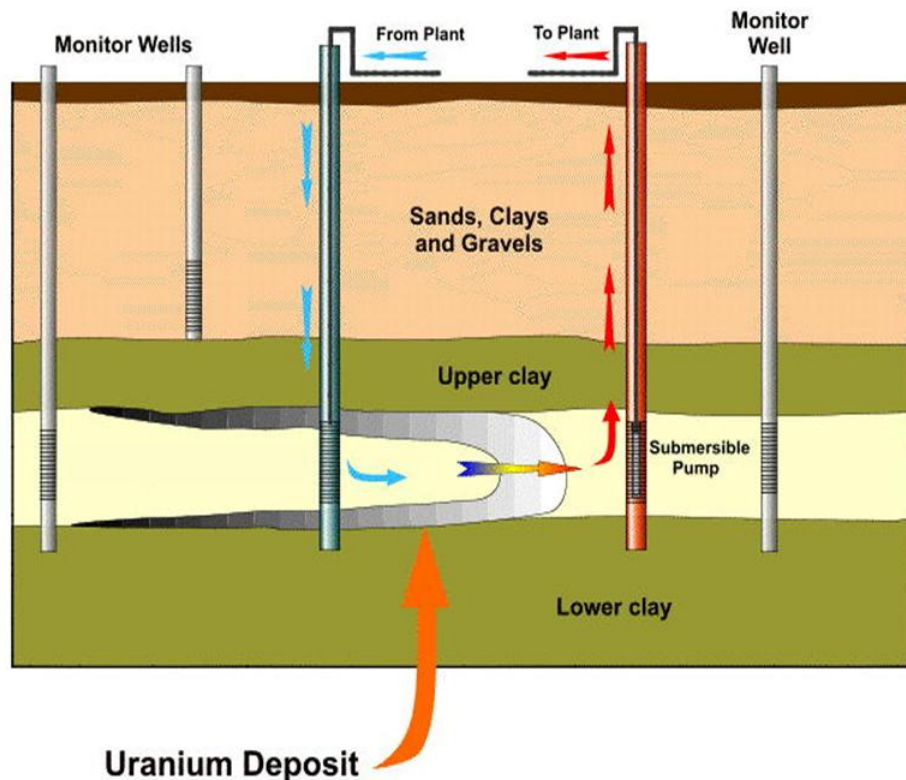
In-situ recovery of uranium involves injecting a leaching agent, typically oxygen with sodium carbonate, through wells into underground ore to dissolve the uranium. The leach solution is pumped back to the surface and sent to a processing plant, where ion exchange is used to separate the uranium from the solution.

The underground leaching of the uranium also frees other metals and minerals from the rock. Before operations begin at Moore Ranch, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, with the assistance of the state of Wyoming, must exempt the groundwater aquifer from Safe Drinking Water Act requirements. After uranium recovery ceases, Energy Metals Corp. US will be required to return the groundwater affected by operations to pre-operation background concentrations.



Dr. Charles Miller (3<sup>rd</sup> from right), director of NRC's Office of Federal and State Materials and Environmental Management Programs, receives the first uranium recovery license application in nearly two decades. With Dr. Miller are members of the team that will review the application.

## The in-situ uranium recovery process



###

News releases are available through a free *listserv* subscription at the following Web address: <http://www.nrc.gov/public-involve/listserver.html>. The NRC homepage at [www.nrc.gov](http://www.nrc.gov) also offers a SUBSCRIBE link. E-mail notifications are sent to subscribers when news releases are posted to NRC's Web site.