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NRC TRANSFERS RESPONSIBILITY FOR
SOUTH DAKOTA URANIUM MILL TAILINGS DISPOSAL SITE TO DOE

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has terminated the Tennessee Valley Authority's license for a closed, cleaned-up uranium mill tailings site in Edgemont, South Dakota, and has placed the site under the custody and long-term care of the Department of Energy.

This is the first commercially operated uranium mill site to be cleaned up satisfactorily by a licensee--in conformance with NRC requirements--so that the license can be terminated and the site turned over to DOE under the Uranium Mill Tailings Radiation Control Act of 1978.

During operation of the mill from 1956 to 1972, about 2.3 million tons of uranium mill tailings accumulated. TVA bought the facility in 1974, but never operated it.

TVA conducted cleanup activities at the site from 1984 to 1989, placing about 4.5 million tons of tailings, contaminated native soil, building equipment and debris in an impoundment designed and engineered for long-term disposal. The impoundment area has been fenced to prevent human or animal intrusion.

NRC formally notified DOE on June 27 that its long-term surveillance plan for the Edgemont site is acceptable. This action and termination of the TVA license complete all legal requirements for permanent closure of the site.

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