

that, at many sites, groundwater-related pathways could contribute significantly to the potential dose received by members of the public. Consequently, consistent with its mission to protect the health and safety of the public and the environment, the NRC uses contaminant transport models to predict the locations and concentrations of radionuclides in soil as a function of time. Through this notice, the NRC is seeking comment on documentation of a subsurface transport model developed for the NRC by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) for realistic transport modeling at sites with complex chemical environments.

Because many radionuclides temporarily attach, or adsorb, to the surfaces of soil particles, their mobility is reduced compared to that of compounds that move with the groundwater without interacting with solid surfaces. As a result, most subsurface-transport models used by the NRC and its licensees estimate the effects of the anticipated interactions between radionuclides and solids in the ground. Toward that end, these subsurface-transport models use a "distribution coefficient," which is assumed to be constant and reflects the proportion of radionuclide in the groundwater compared to the radionuclide associated with the solids in the ground. These distribution coefficients are widely used, and consequently, the relevant literature documents ranges of their values for various soil types and radionuclides. However, the documented ranges can be very large because the chemical reactions that cause radionuclides to attach to solids are very sensitive to water chemistry and soil mineralogy. As a result, uncertainties in the parameters used to characterize the adsorption of radionuclides in soils have been identified as a major source of uncertainty in decommissioning, uranium recovery, and radioactive waste disposal cases evaluated by the NRC.

Surface-complexation and ion-exchange models offer a more realistic approach to considering soil-radionuclide interactions in performance-assessment models. These models can also account for variable chemical environments that might affect such interactions. The subject report, prepared for the NRC by the USGS, describes the theory, implementation, and examples of use of the RATEQ computer code, which simulates radionuclide transport in soil and allows the use of surface-complexation and ion-exchange models to calculate

distribution coefficients based on actual site chemistry.

The RATEQ code will help the NRC staff define realistic site-specific ranges of the distribution coefficient values used to evaluate NRC-licensed sites. In site-remediation cases, such as restoration of the groundwater aquifer in and around uranium in-situ leach mining facilities, the RATEQ code can aid in the estimation of restoration costs by estimating the volume of treatment water needed to restore sites to acceptable environmental conditions.

*Solicitation of Comments:* The NRC seeks comments on the report and is especially interested in comments on the value of the report to users who run the RATEQ code and are familiar with the types of complex chemical environments that complicate many remediation projects.

**DATES:** The NRC will consider all written comments received before September 30, 2005. Comments received after September 30, 2005, will be considered if it is practical to do so, but the NRC staff is able to ensure consideration only for comments received on or before this date. Comments should be addressed to the contact listed below.

*Availability:* An electronic version of the report is available in Adobe Portable Document Format at <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/nuregs/contract/cr6871/cr6871.pdf> and can be read with Adobe Acrobat Reader software, available at no cost from <http://www.adobe.com>. The report and the computer files for the test cases discussed therein are available at <http://www.wrcamnl.wr.usgs.gov/rtn>. Hard and electronic copies of the report are available from the contact listed below.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Dr. John D. Randall, Mail Stop T9C34, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, 11545 Rockville Pike, Rockville, MD 20852, telephone (301) 415-6192, e-mail [jdr@nrc.gov](mailto:jdr@nrc.gov).

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 10th day of June, 2005.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

**Cheryl A. Trottier,**

*Chief, Radiation Protection, Environmental Risk & Waste Management Branch, Division of Systems Analysis and Regulatory Effectiveness, Office of Nuclear Regulatory Research.*

[FR Doc. E5-3200 Filed 6-20-05; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 7590-01-P**

## NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

### Draft Report for Comment: "Consideration of Geochemical Issues in Groundwater Restoration at Uranium In-Situ Leach Mining Facilities," NUREG/CR-6870

**AGENCY:** Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

**ACTION:** Notice of availability and request for comments.

#### Background

Some mining processes use fluids to dissolve (or leach) a mineral without the need to remove physically the ore containing the mineral from an ore deposit in the ground. In general, these "in-situ" leach mining operations at uranium mines are considerably more environmentally benign than traditional mining and milling of uranium ore. Nonetheless, the use of leaching fluids to mine uranium may contaminate the groundwater aquifer in and around the region from which the uranium is extracted. The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) requires licensees to restore the aquifer to established water-quality standards following the cessation of in-situ leach mining operations.

The NRC also requires licensees to ensure that sufficient funds will be available to cover the cost of decommissioning their facilities. For these uranium mines, restoration generally consists of pumping specially treated water into the affected aquifer and removing the displaced water—and thereby the undesirable contaminants—from the system. Because groundwater restoration can represent approximately 40 percent of the cost of decommissioning a uranium leach mining facility, a good estimate of the necessary volume of treatment water is important to estimate the cost of decommissioning accurately.

The subject report, prepared for the NRC by the U.S. Geological Survey, summarizes the application of a geochemical model to the restoration process to estimate the degree to which a licensee has decontaminated a site where a leach mining process has been used. Toward that end, this report analyzes the respective amounts of water and chemical additives pumped into the mined regions to remove and neutralize the residual contamination using 10 different restoration strategies. The analyses show that strategies that used hydrogen sulfide in systems with low natural oxygen content provided the best results. On the basis of those findings, this report also summarizes

the conditions under which various restoration strategies will prove successful. This, in turn, will allow more accurate estimates of restoration and decommissioning costs.

The subject report will be useful for licensees and State regulators overseeing uranium leach mining facilities, who need to estimate the volume of treatment water needed to decontaminate those facilities.

*Solicitation of Comments:* The NRC seeks comments on the report and is especially interested in comments on the utility and feasibility of the modeling techniques described in the report.

**DATES:** The NRC will consider all written comments received before August 31, 2005. Comments received after August 31, 2005, will be considered if it is practical to do so, but the NRC staff is able to ensure consideration only for comments received on or before this date. Comments should be addressed to the contact listed below.

*Availability:* An electronic version of the report is available in Adobe Portable Document Format at <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/nuregs/contract/cr6870/cr6870.pdf> and can be read with Adobe Acrobat Reader software, available at no cost from <http://www.adobe.com>. Hard and electronic copies are available from the contact listed below.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Dr. John D. Randall, Mail Stop T9C34, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, 11545 Rockville Pike, Rockville, MD 20852, telephone (301) 415-6192, e-mail [jdr@nrc.gov](mailto:jdr@nrc.gov).

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 10th day of June, 2005.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

**Cheryl A. Trottier,**

*Chief, Radiation Protection, Environmental Risk & Waste Management Branch, Division of Systems Analysis and Regulatory Effectiveness, Office of Nuclear Regulatory Research.*

[FR Doc. E5-3199 Filed 6-20-05; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 7590-01-P**

## OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

### Excepted Service

**AGENCY:** Office of Personnel Management.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** This gives notice of OPM decisions granting authority to make appointments under Schedules A, B and

C in the excepted service as required by 5 CFR 6.6 and 213.103.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Quasette Crowner, Chief, Executive Resources Group, Center for Leadership and Executive Resources Policy, Division for Strategic Human Resources Policy, 202-606-8046.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Appearing in the listing below are the individual authorities established under Schedules A, B and C between May 1, 2005 and May 31, 2005. Future notices will be published on the fourth Tuesday of each month, or as soon as possible thereafter. A consolidated listing of all authorities as of June 30 is published each year.

### Schedule A

No Schedule A appointments were approved for May 2005.

### Schedule B

No Schedule B appointments were approved for May 2005.

### Schedule C

The following Schedule C appointments were approved during May 2005:

*Section 213.3303 Executive Office of the President*

*Council on Environmental Quality*

EQGS00021 Communications Analyst to the Associate Director for Communications. Effective May 05, 2005.

*Office of Management and Budget*

BOGS60035 Confidential Assistant to the Administrator, Office of Federal Procurement Policy. Effective May 26, 2005.

*Section 213.3304 Department of State*

DSGS60949 Public Affairs Specialist to the Coordinator for International Information Programs. Effective May 09, 2005.

DSGS60951 Congressional Affairs Manager to the Assistant Secretary for International Organizational Affairs. Effective May 09, 2005.

DSGS60965 Foreign Affairs Officer to the Deputy Assistant Secretary. Effective May 11, 2005.

DSGS60962 Legislative Management Officer to the Assistant Secretary for Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs. Effective May 13, 2005.

DSGS60963 Legislative Management Officer to the Assistant Secretary for Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs. Effective May 13, 2005.

*Section 213.3305 Department of the Treasury*

DYGS00457 Senior Advisor to the Chief of Staff. Effective May 27, 2005.

*Section 213.3306 Department of Defense*

DDGS16879 Defense Fellow to the Special Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for White House Liaison. Effective May 17, 2005.

DDGS16876 Staff Assistant to the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Detainee Affairs). Effective May 19, 2005.

DDGS16878 Defense Fellow to the Special Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for White House Liaison. Effective May 26, 2005.

DDGS16872 Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary of Defense (International Secretary Policy). Effective May 27, 2005.

*Section 213.3307 Department of the Army*

DWGS60017 Special Assistant to the Army General Counsel. Effective May 06, 2005.

*Section 213.3309 Department of the Air Force*

DFGS60012 Personal and Confidential Assistant to the General Counsel. Effective May 26, 2005.

*Section 213.3310 Department of Justice*

DJGS00117 Deputy Director, Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives to the Director, Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives. Effective May 17, 2005.

DJGS00306 Special Assistant to the Director, Office of Intergovernmental and Public Liaison. Effective May 20, 2005.

DJGS00057 Chief of Staff to the Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General. Effective May 26, 2005.

*Section 213.3311 Department of Homeland Security*

DMGS00353 Executive Assistant to the Director, State and Local Affairs. Effective May 06, 2005.

DMGS00366 Assistant Director for Legislative Affairs to the Chief of Staff. Effective May 09, 2005.

DMGS00360 Writer-Editor to the Executive Secretary. Effective May 11, 2005.

DMGS00352 Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary for Infrastructure Protection. Effective May 13, 2005.

DMGS00368 Press Assistant to the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs. Effective May 13, 2005.

DMGS00357 Trip Coordinator to the Chief of Staff. Effective May 17, 2005.