

Utah Department of Environmental Quality Press Releases

For the Year 2000

Contents

Additional Public Hearing on Impacts of High-Level Nuclear Waste Storage in Utah Scheduled for Aug. 21
Correction to News Release, "Five Utah Companies Receive Award for Reducing Air Pollution," Dated June 29, 2000
Department of Environmental Quality Appoints
DEQ Appoints Director of Air Quality Division
DEQ Names Acting Director of the Air Quality Division
DEQ's "Red Light-Green Light" Program Begins Wednesday
Director of Air Quality Division Announces Resignation
Envirocare Completes Major Step in Class B and C Low-Level Radioactive Waste Licensing Process
Envirocare Facility Meets Siting Criteria
Five Utah Companies Receive Award for Reducing Air Pollution
Gov. Leavitt to Speak at Public Hearing on Impacts of High-Level Nuclear Waste Storage in Utah
More Information Available on Chemicals in Our Environment
Nuclear Regulatory Commission to Conduct Hearing on Proposed Nuclear Waste Storage Facility
Private Well Owners in Milford Are Encouraged to Test Drinking Water for Bacteria
Public Invited to Make Comments on Storage of High-Level Nuclear Waste in Skull Valley
Public Comment Sought on Envirocare's Land Ownership Exemption Request
Public Comment Sought on Options for Reducing SO₂ Emissions in the West
Public Meeting to Discuss Legacy Parkway
Radiation Board Meets in Ticaboo
Southwestern Jordan Valley Ground Water Plumes Proposed Clean-up Plan
Statement Concerning NRC Hearing and High Level Nuclear Waste Storage in Skull Valley, Utah
Wasatch Front Residents Are Encouraged to Help Reduce Summer Smog
Wildfire Smoke Major Cause of High Air Pollution During Summer
Winter Pollution Season Ends Without a Single Bad Day

More Information Available on Chemicals in Our Environment

February 23, 2000

Contacts:

Neil Taylor, Environmental Response & Remediation, (801) 536-4102
Carol Sisco, DEQ Public Information, (801) 536-4484

Overall chemical releases to Utah's environment, as reported in the Toxic Release Inventory, have increased during the past year. However, most of the increase comes from new reporting requirements rather than from more chemicals being released to the air, land and water.

Total chemical releases increased from just less than 97 million pounds in 1997 to 577 million pounds in 1998. Data is gathered at year's end and compiled the following year. However, 448 million pounds were from the mining industry that wasn't required to report in the past. Additional industries involved in Toxic Release Inventory reporting this year include coal mining, metal mining, electrical generation facilities which burn coal or oil, hazardous waste disposal, wholesale bulk petroleum distribution, chemical wholesale distribution and solvent recycling.

The industries have been regulated and inspected for many years. However, waste they generate was not previously noted in the annual report that is used to inform citizens, industry and government regulators about chemicals found in our environment. It is used to study and identify potential hazards to public health or the environment. The report alone cannot explain environmental risk.

Information on Utah's national ranking is not available yet from the Environmental Protection Agency. But Utah Department of Environmental Quality has gathered information on chemical releases to Utah's air, land and water.

Magnesium Corporation of America continues to be the major source of chemical releases to the air. The company, however, reduced its chlorine and hydrochloric acid emissions by 4.6 million pounds in 1998, going from 62 million to 58 million pounds.

Land releases showed the greatest increase, from 27 million pounds in 1997 to 507 million in 1998. But 448 million pounds were attributed to mining data that was not previously reported. Nearly 476 million pounds of the land releases were reported by Kennecott facilities in the form of copper, manganese, arsenic, zinc, lead and other metal compounds.

The report is available on the Department of Environmental Quality's Web site at:
<http://www.deq.state.ut.us/eqerr/SERC/Trihome.htm>.

Winter Pollution Season Ends Without a Single Bad Day

February 29, 2000

Contacts:

Ursula Kramer, Director, Division of Air Quality, (801) 536-4102
Carol Sisco, DEQ Public Information, (801) 536-4484

The winter pollution season ends today with clear blue skies. No red-burn days, which prohibit wood burning on the most polluted days, were called during the four-month season for the second year in a row. Just one cautionary yellow-burn day was called on New Year's Eve.

"We had a bit of an inversion spell between Christmas and New Years but it never got bad," said Air Monitoring Center Manager Bob Dalley. "It started clearing out Jan. 1, and we've had green-sailing ever since."

Most of the good air can be attributed to a mild winter, said Air Quality Director Ursula Kramer. But pollution also has been diminished because of better pollution controls on both industry and cars. Vehicle inspections also reduce more pollutants than they used to.

Last year was even better with no red or yellow days. During the program's first year there were 23 red burn days in Utah County and 16 in Salt Lake and Davis counties. Since then the greatest number has been seven.

Particulate is the primary winter pollutant. The state's winter program asks residents to avoid wood burning on the worst days to reduce soot and dust that are components of particulate. Wood burning conditions are identified as red, yellow or green depending upon pollution levels.

Radiation Board Meets in Ticaboo

May 1, 2000

Contacts:

Bill Sinclair, Director, Division of Radiation Control, (801) 536-4255

Renette Anderson, DEQ Community Relations, (801) 536-4478

An update on uranium mill activities will be among topics discussed by the Utah Radiation Control Board which meets Friday, May 5, in Ticaboo.

Following discussion of routine agenda items, the Board will take public comment on radiation issues affecting Southeastern Utah. The meeting begins at 9 a.m. at the old Ticaboo schoolhouse. Public discussion is expected to begin at approximately 10 a.m.

The Board will also visit the Shootaring Canyon Mill near Ticaboo during their trip.

"We deal with many issues that directly affect Southeastern Utah residents," Radiation Control Director Bill Sinclair said. "Board members feel it is important to visit the area at least once yearly to hear citizen concerns."

Envirocare Facility Meets Siting Criteria

May 3, 2000

Contacts:

Bill Sinclair, Director, Division of Radiation Control, (801) 536-4255

Renette Anderson, DEQ Public Information, 536-4478

Envirocare of Utah Inc. has met siting criteria requirements, Radiation Control Director Bill Sinclair announced today. This is the second requirement in a five-step process which must be met in determining if the company will be authorized to accept Class B and C low-level radioactive waste at its Tooele County facility.

The remaining steps are license review and approval, legislative approval, and gubernatorial approval. The license application is currently undergoing technical review

by the Division. Envirocare's proposal has previously received planning and zoning approval from Tooele County.

Class B and C wastes are typically generated by nuclear power plants and are more radioactive than the wastes currently accepted by Envirocare.

Department of Environmental Quality Appoints

May 18, 2000

Contacts:

Dianne R. Nielson, Executive Director, 801.536.4402
Laura Vernon, Public Information Officer, 801.536.4484

The Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) announced today the appointment of Laura Vernon as its new Public Information Officer. Vernon will coordinate media and public relations for the Department as well as write newsletters, brochures and other publications. She will also assist in developing content on the Department's web site.

"We are delighted Laura has joined us to help us meet our public information needs," said Dianne Nielson, DEQ Executive Director. "She is an exceptional public relations professional and writer and will be a real asset to DEQ and all those who work with us."

Before joining DEQ, Vernon worked as a public information specialist for the Utah State Office of Education. She began her career as an editor for the Newspaper Agency Corporation before making a transition to public relations. She is a published writer in both newspapers and magazines.

Vernon has a bachelor's degree in journalism from Brigham Young University and a master's degree in professional communication from Westminster College.

Public Meeting to Discuss Legacy Parkway

May 19, 2000

Contacts:

Ursula Kramer, 801.536.4015

Regg Olsen, 801.536.4165

Air Quality Permit Scheduled for May 23

The Department of Environmental Quality, Division of Air Quality, will take public comment about the proposed Approval Order (permit) for the Legacy Parkway construction Tuesday from 6 to 7 p.m., at Bountiful Junior High School, 30 W. 400 North, Bountiful. Written comments can also be submitted.

The proposed Approval Order includes requirements for an emission control plan and for asphalt plants, applicable federal and state rules and record-keeping requirements. The order also applies to sand and gravel storage, handling, crushing and screening, all roads, loading, dumping, hauling, bulldozing, drilling, blasting, earth moving and excavating. The contractor who will build the parkway must comply with detailed requirements, limitations and conditions outlined in the permit.

A full copy of the draft permit is available at the Division of Air Quality, Utah Department of Environmental Quality, 150 N. 1950 West, Salt Lake City, (801) 536-4000.

Written comments should be directed to Ursula Kramer, Executive Secretary, Utah Air Quality Board, 150 N. 1950 West, Salt Lake City, UT, 84114-4820, by June 8, 2000. All comments will be evaluated before the Executive Secretary issues a final Approval Order.

Legacy Parkway construction is slated to begin by January 2001, pending approval by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Federal Highway Administration. The 13-mile proposed Legacy Parkway extends from 2100 North in Salt Lake City to I-15 and U.S. 89 near Farmington. Construction is scheduled to be completed in 2003.

Wasatch Front Residents Are Encouraged to Help Reduce Summer Smog

May 31, 2000

Contacts:

Regg Olsen, Division of Air Quality, 536-4165
Laura Vernon, DEQ Public Information, 536-4484

Spare the Air Campaign Begins June 1

To help reduce summer smog, Wasatch Front residents are encouraged to reduce activities that contribute to ozone, the primary ingredient in smog. Summer smog is a major health and environmental problem in Salt Lake, Davis, Weber and Utah counties. Continued exposure to ozone can reduce lung function and lessen the body's ability to resist respiratory disease and other infections.

The Department of Environmental Quality's Spare the Air campaign begins its seventh season June 1. The campaign runs through the end of September. During these four months, the Air Monitoring Center may call voluntary no-drive days when pollution levels begin to climb. In 1999, favorable weather patterns greatly reduced the number of days we experienced inversions. In fact, Wasatch Front counties exceeded federal air quality standards only one day. In 1998, the standard was exceeded during 21 days.

Since cars cause about 50 percent of summer smog, residents can help keep pollution levels down by driving less. Leaving the car home one day a week, car pooling, riding a bike, walking, taking the bus or telecommuting are ways to reduce smog during the work week.

In addition to driving less or not at all on polluted days, residents can do the following:

Fill the gas tank and mow the lawn in the evening when temperatures are cooler,

Avoid using gasoline-powered engines, such as chain saws, lawn mowers and leaf blowers, on polluted days, and

Use cleaner alternative fuels, such as natural gas, instead of gasoline.

For the latest pollution update, call the Air Pollution Hotline at 533-7239 in Salt Lake and Davis counties or (800) 228-5434 in Utah and Weber counties.

Nuclear Regulatory Commission to Conduct Hearing on Proposed Nuclear Waste Storage Facility

June 15, 2000

Contacts:

Connie Nakahara, 801.366.0523, June 15-16

Dianne R. Nielson, 801.536.4402, week of June 19

Beginning June 19, the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) Atomic Safety and Licensing Board will conduct a hearing on Private Fuel Storage's (PFS) application for a license to construct and operate a spent nuclear fuel storage facility on the Skull Valley Band of Goshute Indian Reservation.

The hearing begins at 9:30 a.m., at the Sheraton City Center Hotel, 150 W. 500 South, Wasatch Room, Mezzanine Level. It will continue each day until concluded. The hearing is open to the public for observation, except for those parts dealing with confidential proprietary information.

According to a NRC news release, The Board will hear testimony, receive exhibits and cross-examine witnesses on issues that have been raised. Issues include costs of constructing and operating the facility, PFS's ability to fight on-site fires and decommissioning. Only the fire-fighting issue and possibly decommissioning will be open to the public. Because PFS claims financial information to be proprietary, cost discussions will be closed and not subject to public scrutiny.

Parties participating in the hearing are the State of Utah, Confederated Tribes of the Goshute Reservation, PFS and NRC.

In addition to attending the hearing, the public can also make brief oral comments to the Board June 23 from 1 to 4 p.m., and 7 to 9:30 p.m., and June 24 from 1 to 4 p.m., at the Sheraton City Center Hotel, 150 W. 500 South, Wasatch Room, Mezzanine Level.

Public Invited to Make Comments on Storage of High-Level Nuclear Waste in Skull Valley

June 15, 2000

Contacts:

Connie Nakahara, 801.366.0523, June 15-16

Dianne R. Nielson, 801.536.4402, week of June 19

The public is invited to make oral comments at the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) Atomic Safety and Licensing Board hearing about Private Fuel Storage's (PFS) application for a license to construct and operate a spent nuclear fuel storage facility on the Skull Valley Band of Goshute Indian Reservation.

Public comment sessions will be June 23 from 1 to 4 p.m., and 7 to 9:30 p.m., and June 24 from 1 to 4 p.m., at the Sheraton City Center Hotel, 150 W. 500 South, Wasatch Room, Mezzanine Level.

"PFS's proposal will impact Utahns throughout the state, and everyone needs to be involved to determine the outcome," said Dianne Nielson, Executive Director of the Utah Department of Environmental Quality. "Since NRC provides few opportunities for the public to participate in the licensing proceedings, it's important to take advantage of this opportunity to express opinions to the Board."

The public may also submit written comments at any time. Statements should be sent by mail to Office of the Secretary, Rulemakings and Adjudications Staff, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, D.C. 20555-0001; by fax to (301) 415-1101; or by e-mail to hearingdocket@nrc.gov.

A copy should also be sent by mail to Administrative Judge G. Paul Bollwerk, III, Atomic Safety and Licensing Board Panel, Mail Stop T-3F23, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, D.C. 20555-0001; by fax to (301) 415-5599; or by e-mail to gpb@nrc.gov.

Statement Concerning NRC Hearing and High Level Nuclear Waste Storage in Skull Valley, Utah

June 20, 2000

Contact:

Dianne R. Nielson, Executive Director, 801.536.4402

Today the State of Utah is litigating the estimated costs of constructing and operating the Private Fuel Storage, L.L.C. (PFS) high level nuclear waste storage facility proposed for the Skull Valley Band of Goshute Indian Reservation, Utah. We are not allowed to discuss specific cost issues because PFS simply claims that financial matters are proprietary. As a result, the public will not be able to scrutinize PFS's financial qualifications to safely operate and close the facility.

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) has done an unacceptable job at reviewing and approving PFS's financial qualifications. Although the State has raised many substantial concerns about PFS's financial status, NRC has restricted the State to only questioning PFS's cost estimates. NRC has not thoroughly investigated the financial viability of PFS itself and the proposed storage facility.

PFS is a limited liability company with no assets of its own. As a limited liability company, PFS member utilities will be shielded from individual liability for any incidents related to the PFS project. Therefore, there are no deep pockets to fund unforeseen safety problems that may occur.

Although NRC regulations require the demonstration, NRC will not require PFS to demonstrate its financial qualifications prior to granting PFS a construction and operating license for a 4,000-cask nuclear waste storage facility. Although the State believes PFS's current and projected assets, liabilities, and capital structures are critical to ensure financial responsibility, NRC said it was not necessary to look at PFS's current financial status. According to NRC, "PFS will have no significant assets, liabilities, and capital" until a license is granted. Thus, NRC's attitude essentially nullifies its own financial assurance requirements. Moreover, instead of deciding now whether PFS has adequate funds to undertake this project, NRC is forcing the State of Utah and other intervenors to spend significant funds to participate in this licensing proceeding.

PFS will not be required to show that there is a viable market for the storage facility. PFS should demonstrate a viable market now as part of the licensing proceeding, and should not be issued an NCR license if no market exists. PFS has been unwilling to disclose whether any utility has actually agreed to store nuclear waste at the Skull Valley site. If there is not a sufficient market, PFS may be forced to cut corners and jeopardize safety.

NRC does not require any insurance or bonding to ensure liability coverage in the event of an accident.

Although required by regulation, NRC will not require PFS to set aside all decommissioning funds prior to receiving a license.

The State has no confidence in NRC's evaluation of PFS's financial qualifications. NRC recently issued a license to a company it knew was on the verge of bankruptcy.

In general, NRC has accepted unsupported statements and required little documentation that support PFS's claims about its financial capabilities. Moreover, NRC has relied on unenforceable license conditions that defer any financial demonstration until after the license is issued. As a result, NRC will allow PFS to construct the facility before PFS is required to show revenue sources to operate it. Once the facility is constructed, PFS will have a strong impetus to move forward with operation -- possibly sacrificing safety. Furthermore, NRC did not even evaluate PFS's current data. For example, NRC approved PFS's outdated construction cost estimates that are more than half of PFS's own updated cost estimates.

Under NRC's approach, the State and the public are completely excluded from the process and denied their right to challenge whether PFS is financially qualified.

Public Comment Sought on Options for Reducing SO₂ Emissions in the West

June 26, 2000

Contacts:

Ursula Kramer, Division of Air Quality, (801) 536-4015

Jan Miller, Division of Air Quality, (801) 536-4042

A public workshop will be held Wednesday at 7 p.m. at the Department of Environmental Quality, 168 N. 1950 West, Salt Lake City, to review and solicit comments on the Western Regional Air Partnership's (WRAP) draft recommendations and options for reducing sulfur dioxide (SO₂) emissions from large industrial sources over the next two decades, including a backstop "cap-and-trade" program to ensure the reductions are achieved.

Western states, tribes and federal agencies that are members of the WRAP will make a final recommendation to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Oct. 2, 2000. The

draft recommendations and options were developed over the last two years by WRAP committees comprising a diverse group of stakeholders, including industry, environmental groups and academia.

DEQ Executive Director Dianne Nielson and stakeholders participating in the WRAP will explain the recommendations and options and how they may affect Utah. The public will have an opportunity to ask questions and make comments, which will be considered before a final recommendation is made.

"This is an opportunity for western states to protect visibility with a plan developed by western stakeholders," Nielson said. "Furthermore, a market trading program is likely to be the most cost-effective way to do it. We want public comment to help us refine the proposal."

Under EPA's regional haze rule, nine Western states have the option of establishing milestones for reducing SO₂ emissions through the year 2018. These milestones must show greater progress toward reducing SO₂ emissions than would be achieved by requiring older facilities to install what is known as Best Available Retrofit Technology through a command-and-control regulatory program. The WRAP is seeking comments on how many tons of SO₂ emissions should be cut by what industries by 2018, and for the interim years of 2003, 2008 and 2013.

Also under consideration is a backstop cap-and-trade program which would go into effect if the emission reductions established by the milestones are not achieved. Under that program, each source of emissions -- such as power plants and smelters -- would be given a certain number of "allowances" or amount of emissions that it could trade. A source that exceeded its allowance could, for example, purchase allowances from another source that is under its limit.

Documents related to the proposals, prepared by the WRAP's Market Trading Forum and Initiatives Oversight Committee, are available on the WRAP web site at www.wrapair.org (opens in a new window). Copies of all related documents may also be obtained by contacting: Patrick Cummins, Western Governors' Association, 600 17th Street, Suite 1705 S. Tower, Denver, CO 80202, (303) 623-9378, pcummins@westgov.org; or Bill Grantham, National Tribal Environmental Council, 2221 Rio Grande NW, Albuquerque, NM 87104, (505) 242-2175, bgrantham@ntec.org.

ABOUT THE WRAP: The WRAP was created as the successor organization to the Grand Canyon Visibility Transport Commission, which made over 70 recommendations in June 1996 for improving visibility in 16 national parks and wilderness areas on the Colorado Plateau. The Partnership promotes, supports and monitors the implementation of those recommendations throughout the West. The WRAP is also implementing regional planning processes to improve visibility in all Western Class I areas, setting up the necessary subgroups to address areas beyond the Colorado Plateau, including the Northwest. The WRAP is jointly administered by the Western Governors' Association (WGA) and the National Tribal Environmental Council (NTEC).

Five Utah Companies Receive Award for Reducing Air Pollution

June 29, 2000

Contacts:

Rick Sprott, Division of Air Quality, (801) 536-4151

The Department of Environmental Quality, Division of Air Quality will recognize five Utah companies for reducing air pollution emissions at specific plants by more than 50 percent. The Air Pollution Reduction Award recipients are:

Amoco, Salt Lake City Refinery—Salt Lake City

LDS Hospital—Salt Lake City

Pacificorp, Hunter Power Plant—Castle Dale

Thiokol, Clearfield Plant—Clearfield

Questar Pipeline Company, Oak Spring Turbine Compressor Station—near Spring Glen in Carbon County

The companies will be recognized at the Division of Air Quality Board Meeting Wednesday at 1:30 p.m. at the Department of Environmental Quality, 168 N. 1950 West, Salt Lake City, Room 101.

Between 1990 and 1998, the Amoco Salt Lake City Refinery reduced air emissions by 75 percent; LDS Hospital by 97 percent; Pacificorp, Hunter Power Plant by 57 percent; Thiokol, Clearfield Plant by 97 percent; and Questar Pipeline Company, Oak Spring Turbine Compressor Station by 94 percent. Reduced pollutants include particulate matter, sulfur compounds, nitrogen oxides, volatile ozone-forming contaminants and carbon monoxide.

"Collectively, these five plants have eliminated more than 42,000 tons of pollution in and around the Wasatch Front and sensitive national areas," said Rick Sprott, Division of Air Quality planning manager. "These reductions have reduced the impact on respiratory illnesses as well as our visibility."

Recipients were selected based on three criteria: a reduction in air pollution emissions by 50 percent or more between 1990 and 1998, a good environmental compliance track record and air pollution reduction results based on positive actions by the company, not decreased business activity.

Correction to News Release, "Five Utah Companies Receive Award for Reducing Air Pollution," Dated June 29, 2000

July 3, 2000

Contacts:

Rick Sprott, Division of Air Quality, (801) 536-4151

The Department of Environmental Quality, Division of Air Quality (DAQ) originally selected Questar Pipeline Company, Oak Spring Turbine Compressor Station as one of five Utah companies to receive the Air Pollution Reduction Award for reducing air pollution between 1990 and 1998. Although Questar Pipeline Company, Oak Spring Turbine Compressor Station has a good compliance record and has installed advanced pollution control equipment to prevent air pollution, it only began operation in 1998. Therefore, it meets only two of the three criteria required to receive this award. As a result, DAQ removed the Questar station from the list of award recipients.

The remaining four recipients of the Air Pollution Reduction Award are:

Amoco, Salt Lake City Refinery—Salt Lake City
LDS Hospital—Salt Lake City
PacifiCorp, Hunter Power Plant—Castle Dale
Thiokol, Clearfield Plant—Clearfield

DAQ will recognize these four Utah companies at its board meeting Wednesday at 1:30 p.m. at the Department of Environmental Quality, 168 N. 1950 West, Salt Lake City, Room 101.

Recipients were selected based on three criteria: a reduction in air pollution emissions by 50 percent or more between 1990 and 1998, a good environmental compliance track record and air pollution reduction results based on positive actions by the company, not decreased business activity.

Director of Air Quality Division Announces Resignation

July 18, 2000

Contacts:

Ursula Kramer, Director, Division of Air Quality, 801.536.4015
Dianne Nielson, Executive Director, Department of Environmental Quality,
801.536.4402

Ursula Kramer, Director of the Utah Division of Air Quality, announced her resignation today. She has accepted a position with Pima County in Arizona as Director of Environmental Quality. "Over the years at DEQ, it has been both a pleasure and privilege to have worked with so many wonderful people and to have had many opportunities for professional growth," Kramer said. "Although I will miss friends and colleagues in Utah, I look forward to new opportunities in Arizona."

In addition to her leadership in developing and implementing air quality plans and programs along the Wasatch Front, she has played a key role in western regional efforts to improve visibility in national parks and monuments throughout the West.

"During her 17 years at the Department of Environmental Quality, Ursula has worked tirelessly to improve the environment in Utah," said Dianne Nielson, Executive Director of the Department of Environmental Quality. "Her leadership in air quality has been critical during this time of growth throughout Utah."

Kramer has been Director of the Division and Executive Secretary of the Air Quality Board since 1996. Prior to that time, she worked as an engineer and in management positions within the Bureau of Public Water Supply and Bureau of Solid and Hazardous Waste as well as the Division of Environmental Response and Remediation at the Department of Environmental Quality.

Gov. Leavitt to Speak at Public Hearing on Impacts of High-Level Nuclear Waste Storage in Utah

July 25, 2000

Contacts:

Dianne Nielson, Executive Director, Department of Environmental Quality,
801.536.4402

Connie Nakahara, Director, High-Level Nuclear Waste Storage Opposition,
801.366.0523

Gov. Michael Leavitt is scheduled to speak Thursday to the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs and the U.S. Surface Transportation Board at a public hearing on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Private Fuel Storage high-level nuclear waste storage facility in Skull Valley. The public is also encouraged to speak at that hearing on Thursday from 7 to 10 p.m. at the Little America Inn, Arizona Room, 500 S. Main St. in Salt Lake City.

A second public hearing will be held Friday in Grantsville from 7 to 10 p.m. at Grantsville Middle School, 318 S. Hale St. Those wishing to make comments should register 15 minutes prior to the meeting at the meeting location. In addition to the hearings, the public can learn more about the impacts of high-level nuclear waste transportation and storage at information forums scheduled for Wednesday from 7 to 8 p.m. at the Salt Lake City Council Chambers, Room #315, 451 S. State St., Salt Lake City; and Thursday from 4 to 5:30 p.m. at Westminster College, Gore Auditorium, 1300 E. 1840 South, Salt Lake City.

To obtain a copy of the DEIS:

Write the Office of the Chief Information Officer, Reproduction and Distribution Services Section, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001

Send an e-mail to distribution@NRC.gov

Fax to (301) 415-2289

Online at www.nrc.gov/NRC/NUREGS/SR1714/index.html (opens in a new window).

A copy should be available at the University of Utah Marriott Library, official NRC document repository. A copy is also available for reading at:

Department of Environmental Quality, Office of Planning and Public Affairs
168 N. 1950 West
Salt Lake City
from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Written comments on the DEIS must be submitted by September 21, 2000

Send comments to:

David L. Meyer, Chief
Rules and Directives Branch
Division of Freedom of Information and Publications Services
Office of Administration
Mail Stop T-6D-59
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, DC
20555-0001

For more information, visit the web site www.deq.state.ut.us/hlw/home.htm.

Southwestern Jordan Valley Ground Water Plumes Proposed Clean-up Plan

July 28, 2000

Contacts:

Doug Bacon, UDEQ Project Manager, (801) 536-4282
Eva Hoffman, EPA Project Manager, 1-800-227-8917 x6764
Louie Cononelos, Kennecott, (801) 252-3103
David Ovard, Jordan Valley Water Conservancy District, (801) 565-8903

The public is invited to comment on a proposal to clean up contaminated ground water in the southwestern Jordan Valley area. Groundwater was contaminated by historic mining activities in the Oquirrh Mountains. Several plumes were formed as a result. The impacted area is part of the Kennecott South Zone and generally underlies portions of West Jordan, South Jordan, Riverton, and Herriman cities and unincorporated areas of southwest Salt Lake County. The public is invited to comment on the proposal. Public comment period runs from Aug. 1 to Aug. 30, 2000. An open house will be held Aug. 1 from 4 to 8 p.m. at UDEQ, 168 N. 1950 West, Room 101, Salt Lake City. A brief presentation on the proposal will be given at 4, 5, 6, and 7 p.m. A public hearing will be held Aug. 9 at 7 p.m. at the West Jordan City Council Chambers, 8000 S. Redwood Rd.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Utah Department of Environmental Quality have announced a "pump and treat" scenario as the Preferred Alternative in a proposed plan released publicly. The agencies have determined that it is necessary to remove the contaminated water from the aquifer to prevent it from spreading. The water will be treated then made available as a public drinking water source. The agencies have been working closely with Kennecott, the Jordan Valley Water Conservancy District, and the state and local water interests to develop the plan. The process is being administered under Superfund law and a Natural Resource Damage Claim settlement awarded to the State.

For a copy of the proposed plan, please contact Renette Anderson, UDEQ Community Relations, at (801) 536-4478.

Additional Public Hearing on Impacts of High-Level Nuclear Waste Storage in Utah Scheduled for Aug. 21

July 25, 2000

Contacts:

Dianne Nielson, Executive Director, Department of Environmental Quality,
801.536.4402

Connie Nakahara, Director, High-Level Nuclear Waste Storage Opposition,
801.366.0523

The State of Utah has received notification from the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) that an additional hearing has been scheduled for the public to comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) concerning the proposed Private Fuel Storage high-level nuclear waste storage facility on the Skull Valley Band of Goshute Reservation.

The public hearing is scheduled for Monday, Aug. 21, 2000, from 2 to 4 p.m. and 6 to 9 p.m. at Little America, 500 S. Main St., in Salt Lake City. This additional hearing is a response to numerous requests from Gov. Michael Leavitt and concerned citizens to schedule more hearings for public comment.

To obtain a copy of the DEIS, write the Office of the Chief Information Officer, Reproduction and Distribution Services Section, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001; send an e-mail to distribution@NRC.gov or a fax to (301) 415-2289; or go online at www.nrc.gov/NRC/NUREGS/SR1714/index.html (opens in a new window). A copy should be available at the University of Utah Marriott Library, official NRC document repository.

A copy is also available for reading at the Department of Environmental Quality, Office of Planning and Public Affairs, 168 N. 1950 West, Salt Lake City, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. Written comments on the DEIS must be submitted to the NRC by Sept. 21, 2000. Send comments to David L. Meyer, Chief, Rules and Directives Branch, Division of Freedom of Information and Publications Services, Office of Administration, Mail Stop T-6D-59, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001. For more information, visit the web site www.deq.state.ut.us/hlw/home.htm.

DEQ Names Acting Director of the Air Quality Division

September 6, 2000

Contacts:

Laura Vernon, DEQ Public Information Officer, (801) 536-4484

Richard Sprott has been named Acting Director of the Utah Division of Air Quality and Executive Secretary of the Utah Air Quality Board. Sprott will serve as acting director until a permanent replacement for former director, Ursula Kramer, is found. Kramer resigned in August after accepting a position with Pima County, Ariz. Sprott will also continue to serve as manager of the Division's Planning Branch.

"We are fortunate to have Rick's leadership abilities and expertise moving the Division forward in protecting air quality not only in Utah but also in the western region," said Dianne Nielson, Executive Director of the Utah Department of Environmental Quality.

Sprott assumes the responsibility of leading Utah's efforts with other western states to solve the regional haze problems in national parks. Sprott also continues to oversee development of a new PM10 maintenance plan to resolve transportation conformity problems.

"I'm privileged to have this opportunity to work more closely with people involved in setting air quality policy," Sprott said. "Air quality is very important to the citizens of Utah and we are committed to keep the air we breath as clean as possible."

Sprott came to the Division of Air Quality in 1994 as an environmental scientist in the Operating Permits Section, where he focused primarily on toxic air pollutants and electric utility permitting. Prior to coming to the Division, Sprott served as a career officer in the U.S. Air Force. His final assignment was at Hill Air Force Base as Deputy Chief of the Science, Technology, and Environmental Services Division.

Sprott has a bachelor's degree in chemistry from Grinnell College and a master's degree in environmental management from Duke University. While at Duke University, he received the Atmospheric Sciences Academic Achievement Award from the Central North Carolina Chapter of the American Meteorological Society for his work in toxic air pollutants.

Private Well Owners in Milford Are Encouraged to Test Drinking Water for Bacteria

September 22, 2000

Contacts:

Don Ostler, Director, Division of Water Quality, (801) 538-6047
Bill Damery, Division of Water Quality, (801) 538-6032

The Department of Environmental Quality and the Southwest Utah Public Health Department are encouraging Milford Valley private drinking water well owners to test their drinking water quarterly for total coliform and fecal coliform. Previous water tests have found these types of bacteria to be present from time to time in private wells.

Most bacteria found in water wells are harmless and pose no health risk. However, the presence of fecal coliform may indicate fecal waste contamination in the water, which could pose a health threat to humans, especially those with compromised immune systems, such as infants, the elderly, and those with HIV, cancer, or some other serious health condition.

The Utah Drinking Water standard for acceptable drinking water is a total coliform count of zero. Coliform bacteria are a large group of various species of bacteria. They include bacteria that occur naturally in the intestines of warm-blooded animals (fecal coliform) and non-fecal coliform bacteria.

Well owners who find the presence of total coliform or fecal coliform in their well water, no matter the amount, should immediately contact their local health department and consider disinfecting their wells. They should also boil their water for human consumption if fecal coliform is found, and continue this process until consecutive samples indicate fecal-free well water.

To find the source of bacteria in private wells, DEQ recently tested the ground water on behalf of the Milford Valley Ground Water Steering Committee. To date, no "frank" pathogens (bacteria that cause disease in a healthy person) have been found in any of the wells. Furthermore, contrary to a recent news story, no definitive link has been made between bacteria found in private drinking water wells and bacteria in Circle Four lagoons or wells.

"We are working with several agencies to review and more fully understand the latest investigation's conclusions," said Bill Damery, Division of Water Quality environmental scientist.

DEQ and local health departments have no regulatory authority over private wells. Therefore, private well owners have to assume the responsibility of not only testing their water but also maintaining their private wells.

or more information or to report coliform monitoring results from private wells, contact Scott Hacking at the Utah Department of Environmental Quality or Bill Dawson at the Southwest Utah Public Health Department. Both can be reached at (435) 586-2437.

Wildfire Smoke Major Cause of High Air Pollution During Summer

October 2, 2000

Contacts:

Bob Dalley, Manager, Air Monitoring Center, (801) 887-0762
Rick Sprott, Acting Director, Division of Air Quality, (801) 536-4151

The Division of Air Quality's Air Monitoring Center called nine voluntary no-drive days and issued health advisories for four days during the summer "Spare the Air" season, which ran from June 1 to Sept. 30. Pollution from wildfires in the West is partly to blame.

"Wildfires are often ozone factories," said Rick Sprott, acting director of the Division of Air Quality. "A cloud of smoke may contain lots of ozone because fires create organic compounds and nitrogen oxides that react with heat and sunshine to produce ozone."

Salt Lake and Davis counties exceeded the one-hour National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) during three days from June 1 to Sept. 30, which caused both counties to potentially violate the one-hour standard. During that same period, the eight-hour NAAQS was exceeded eight days in Weber, Davis, Salt Lake and Utah counties. Davis, Salt Lake and Utah counties also possibly violated the eight-hour standard. This would be the first year ever that Utah County has violated an ozone standard.

This is also the first year that the entire network of air monitoring stations positioned along the Wasatch Front registered ozone levels in excess of the standards.

"We had a fairly bad year that we attribute mostly to natural causes," Sprott said. "In our best judgment, we wouldn't have had some of these exceedences without the wildfires, and we will request that EPA 'flag' the exceedences during the wildfire episodes. We hope that this will allow us to avoid being re-designated as non-attainment for the ozone standards."

Despite the smoke's contribution to high ozone levels this summer, residents along the Wasatch Front are urged to minimize human causes of ozone. Driving less, using cleaner alternative fuels like natural gas and riding mass transit can help keep pollution levels down.

Summer smog primarily consists of ozone and is a major health and environmental concern in Utah's urban counties. Continued exposure can reduce lung function and lessen the body's ability to resist respiratory diseases and other infections.

DEQ's "Red Light–Green Light" Program Begins Wednesday

October 31, 2000

Contacts:

Bob Dalley, Air Monitoring Center, (801) 887-0762

Rick Sprott, Division of Air Quality, (801) 536-4151

Air quality program curtails wood burning during winter inversions

The Department of Environmental Quality's "Red Light–Green Light" program, which curtails wood burning along the Wasatch Front during winter inversions, starts its eighth season Wednesday, Nov. 1 and continues until March 1, 2001.

Wood-burning conditions are identified as "RED, YELLOW, GREEN." The system, used to notify citizens when they can burn, is simple: A red traffic light indicates burning is generally prohibited, yellow means a voluntary no burn and green means burning is allowed. However, stoves should be used properly to reduce pollution.

Wasatch Front residents will also be asked to drive as little as possible during red and yellow days because cars contribute significantly to the area's air pollution. Industries will be asked to minimize their release of air pollutants and to ensure that air pollution control equipment is functioning properly.

The program reduces particulate air pollution (PM10 and 2.5) and carbon monoxide.

During the winter season last year, there were no exceedences of the national health standard for PM10 or carbon monoxide along the Wasatch Front. Furthermore, there were no red or yellow days in Salt Lake, Davis, Utah or Weber counties.

It is possible to have a "red day" without exceeding the federal health-based standards for PM10, PM2.5 or carbon monoxide because red days are called as pollution begins to approach dangerous levels.

Fines can be levied against violators, with first-time offenders charged up to \$25, second-time offenders pay \$50 to \$140 and third-time offenders face fines from \$150 to \$299.

Burning is allowed on red days if no smoke is visible from the chimney. That can be accomplished by using EPA-certified stoves, burning small hot fires and avoiding use of wet wood.

Pollution conditions are announced daily by newspapers, television and radio stations. Recorded updates can be obtained from the Air Pollution Index Hotline at 975-4009 for Salt Lake and Davis counties and (800) 228-5434 elsewhere, and on the Air Monitoring Center homepage on the Internet at <http://www.deq.state.ut.us/eqamc/amc.htm>.

Envirocare Completes Major Step in Class B and C Low-Level Radioactive Waste Licensing Process

November 24, 2000

Contacts:

Bill Sinclair, Division of Radiation Control Director, (801) 536-4255
Laura Vernon, DEQ Public Information Officer, (801) 536-4484

Envirocare of Utah's license application to accept Class B and C low-level radioactive waste has been declared complete by the Department of Environmental Quality's Division of Radiation Control. While it is not the final step in obtaining a license, it does mean Envirocare has provided the Division of Radiation Control with all the technical information necessary to continue the process.

"This is a significant step," said Bill Sinclair, director of the Division of Radiation Control. "We can now complete the work necessary to move into the public participation portion of the licensing process."

The Division of Radiation Control will provide the public with documents that explain how Envirocare has satisfied a myriad of regulatory and technical requirements, and a list of conditions within a license under which the facility must operate.

A 60-day public comment period will begin after the draft documents, which include a Safety Evaluation Report and Radioactive Materials License, are completed by the Division of Radiation Control. A revised copy of Envirocare's application to accept containerized Class A, B and C low-level radioactive waste will also be available. Public hearings will be held in Salt Lake City and Tooele to receive comment. Public information meetings will precede each hearing. Dates, times and locations will be

announced.

The Division of Radiation Control must assess all oral and written comments before making a final licensing decision. Following any final agency action, the Legislature and the Governor must also approve the facility.

DEQ Appoints Director of Air Quality Division

December 13, 2000

Contacts:

Dianne R. Nielson, DEQ Executive Director, (801) 536-4402
Rick Sprott, Division of Air Quality, (801) 536-4151

Richard Sprott has been appointed Director of the Utah Division of Air Quality. Sprott replaces Ursula Kramer, who resigned in August after accepting a position with Pima County, Ariz. At the time of his appointment, Sprott was serving as acting division director and manager of the division's Planning Branch. DAQ will begin immediately the recruiting process to fill the planning branch manager position he vacates.

"Today, Utah's quality of life, economic development and decisions on growth depend on the quality of our air, just as our future air quality will reflect our actions and plans. Rick Sprott brings technical and management expertise, focus on partnership, commitment to finding solutions and capable leadership, all of which are essential if we are to meet the challenge," said Dianne Nielson, Executive Director of the Utah Department of Environmental Quality.

"We are fortunate and delighted to have found someone in our community with the depth of knowledge, background and experience that Rick has in the environmental field," said Howard Van Boerum, Chairman of the Air Quality Board.

As director, Sprott has the responsibility of leading Utah's efforts with other western states to improve visibility in national parks and class I airsheds. Sprott also oversees development of a new PM10 maintenance plan to resolve transportation conformity problems.

"It's important as we look to the future that we find smarter, more creative ways of protecting the environment while accommodating growth," Sprott said. "I'm committed to working with concerned citizens, regulated communities, elected officials and local health departments to improve air quality and maintain quality of life."

Sprott came to the Division of Air Quality in 1994 as an environmental scientist in the Operating Permits Section, where he focused primarily on toxic air pollutants and electric

utility permitting. Prior to coming to the Division, Sprott served as a career officer in the U.S. Air Force. His final assignment was at Hill Air Force Base as Deputy Chief of the Science, Technology, and Environmental Services Division.

Sprott has a bachelor's degree in chemistry from Grinnell College and a master's degree in environmental management from Duke University. While at Duke University, he received the Atmospheric Sciences Academic Achievement Award from the Central North Carolina Chapter of the American Meteorological Society for his work in toxic air pollutants.

Public Comment Sought on Envirocare's Land Ownership Exemption Request

December 14, 2000

Contacts:

Bill Sinclair, Division of Radiation Control Director, (801) 536-4255

The Utah Radiation Control Board is seeking public comment on Envirocare's request for an exemption from the governmental land ownership requirements in connection with the disposal of containerized Class A, B and C low-level radioactive waste.

The public may provide comments either orally or in writing. To accept oral comments, the Radiation Control Board will conduct two public hearings. The hearings are scheduled for Jan. 4 at 7 p.m., at the Department of Environmental Quality, 168 N. 1950 West, Room 101, Salt Lake City; and Jan. 11 at 7 p.m., at the Tooele County Courthouse Auditorium, 47 S. Main, Tooele.

The public should submit written comments by mail to William J. Sinclair, Executive Secretary, Utah Radiation Control Board, PO Box 144850, Salt Lake City, UT 84114-4850; or by e-mail to bsinclair@deq.state.ut.us. Written and e-mail comments must be received by 5 p.m. on Jan. 12, 2001.

"To accommodate the public's request for more opportunities to provide input, the Radiation Control Board decided to hold additional public hearings and extend the deadline for written comments," said Bill Sinclair, director of the Division of Radiation Control and executive secretary of the Radiation Control Board.

A copy of the Envirocare governmental land ownership rule exemption request is available for public review and for copying between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, at the Division of Radiation Control, 168 N. 1950 West, Room 212, Salt Lake City. Information regarding Envirocare's exemption request may also be obtained by

contacting Bill Sinclair at (801) 536-4250 or visiting the web site www.deq.state.ut.us/eqrad/drc_hmpg.htm.

The Radiation Control Board will consider all public comments, both oral and written, before acting on Envirocare's request. Board action on the exemption request is scheduled for Jan. 19 at 2 p.m., at the Department of Environmental Quality, 168 N. 1950 West, Room 101, Salt Lake City.