

government. The approval follows the submission of a mining lease application in May (NN, July 2017, p. 70) and subsequent ministerial and public consultations on the impact of the development of the project.

Peter Reeve, Aura Energy's executive chairman, said, "Achieving this milestone for Aura's Tiris uranium project on schedule and with the strong support of the Mauritanian government is another solid step forward for Aura to production and cash flow."

The 1,000-page ESIA captures studies of environmental baseline monitoring, flora and fauna, ecosystem and habitat sensi-

tivity, noise and air quality, water, archeological and cultural heritage, and population and migration patterns of nomadic tribes, as well as extensive community engagement. Its approval covers all mining and processing activities, including the establishment of plans for radiation management.

■ Boss Resources Limited has begun a field leach trial at its Honeymoon uranium project in South Australia. The construction phase was completed in mid-August, and wellfield conditioning started on August 11. An ion exchange pilot plant has been installed, and plant commissioning and operator training are under way.

The field leach trial is on schedule for completion in November.

RELEASES

Yellowcake and injection fluid leaks reported to NRC

A shipment of uranium concentrate, also known as yellowcake, left Cameco Resources' Smith Ranch-Highland mine in Wyoming on July 12. When it arrived at the Honeywell Metropolis Works conversion facility in Metropolis, Ill., on July 14, one of the drums containing the yellowcake was found to be leaking.

According to an August 22 letter sent by Cameco to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's Region IV Office, workers unloading the shipment from a trailer at Metropolis Works noticed that there was a pinhole leak in one of the drums and that a small quantity of material (less than 25 grams) had accumulated on the trailer floor. Photos were taken of the yellowcake on the trailer floor and the pinhole leak before the drum was temporarily patched. The yellowcake was recovered from the trailer, and the drum and shipping trailer were decontaminated.

The incident was reported to Cameco, the Department of Transportation, and the NRC. Cameco removed the "drum grab" tool in use at Smith Ranch-Highland at the time of the incident, started an investigation, and suspended yellowcake shipments until the internal investigation was complete. The hole in the drum (and the subsequent leak) was attributed to the degraded condition of the drum grab and dim lighting in the area where drums are loaded, which made inspection of the drum grab and the drum more difficult. A new drum handler was ordered, and the lighting in the drum storage area was improved.

In a September 8 letter to Cameco's Lawrence Reimann, manager of compliance and licensing at Smith Ranch-Highland, the NRC's Ray Kellar, of the Fuel Cycle and Decommissioning Branch of the Division of Nuclear Materials Safety, stated, "The NRC has reviewed your letter, the corrective actions implemented, and those that are planned prior to resuming shipment and have no further questions at this time. The corrective actions will be examined during a future inspection."

■ Lost Creek ISR LLC sent a report to the NRC on a release of injection fluid that was discovered at the *in situ* mining project in Wyoming on September 5. An estimated 10,000 gallons of injection fluid with a uranium concentration of 1.1 ppm was released in Header House 1-10. A segment of PVC injection line piping in the

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