



Colorado Department  
of Public Health  
and Environment

# NEWS RELEASE

Office of Communications  
Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

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## **State releases NRC letter confirming federal government will not intervene in Piñon Ridge radioactive materials license decision**

DENVER –The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment yesterday filed in Denver District Court its reply to Sheep Mountain Alliance in the alliance’s ongoing litigation challenging the state’s approval of a radioactive materials license for the Piñon Ridge Uranium Mill in western Montrose County. The state’s filing included a letter from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to the department’s Executive Director Dr. Chris Urbina, dated April 4, confirming the federal government has neither the authority nor the intention to intervene in the state’s licensing decision.

Mark Satorius, director of the Office of Federal and State Materials and Environmental Management Programs at NRC stated in the April 4 letter, “The NRC’s February 27, 2012, letter [to the department] was intended to further a dialogue between the NRC staff and CDPHE staff regarding the compatibility of certain Colorado regulations. In retrospect, our letter was not clear, as it was not the NRC staff’s intent to intercede in the pending litigation related to the Piñon Ridge uranium license issued by the CDPHE.”

Satorius’s April 4 letter also noted the commission’s Feb. 27 letter “should not be taken to mean that the NRC has formed a conclusion with respect to the validity of any individual Colorado licensing action.”

Dr. Urbina said, “We are grateful the NRC has clarified its position and confirmed the commission did not intend to involve itself in litigation in Denver District Court regarding the radioactive materials license.

“We stand by our Piñon Ridge decision, which was based on a thorough and rigorous technical review featuring an open public process that far exceeded the requirements of Colorado law,” Dr. Urbina said. “We are eager to work with the NRC through the Integrated Materials Performance Evaluation Program, which is the appropriate forum in which to resolve any programmatic concerns.”

Access the department’s [April 9 court filing](#) and the [April 4 letter from NRC](#).