

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

MAY 27 1987

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Reactivation of Noranda Lakeshore Mines' RLA Plant and PSD Review

FROM: John S. Seitz, Director Stationary Source Compliance Division
 Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards

TO: David P. Howekamp, Director Air Management Division, Region IX

Pursuant to your recent request, this memorandum addresses the status of Noranda Lakeshore Mines' roaster leach acid (RLA) plant in Arizona. Noranda is contemplating startup of the RLA plant which has been shut down since 1977. The company contends that the shutdown was not intended to be permanent, and therefore believes that the plant should not be subject to PSD review.

Whether or not a source which has been shut down is subject to PSD review upon reactivation depends on whether the shutdown is considered permanent. EPA evaluates permanence of shutdowns based on the intent of the owner or operator. The facts and circumstances of the particular case, including the duration of the shutdown and the handling of the shutdown by the State, are considered as evidence of the owner or operator's intent. This decision making framework follows the policy on plant reactivation which EPA set forth in 1978. The September 6, 1978 memorandum which initiated this policy states: "A shutdown lasting for two years or more, or resulting in removal of the source from the emissions inventory of the State, should be presumed permanent. The owner or operator proposing to reopen the source would have

the burden of showing that the shutdown was not permanent, and of overcoming any presumption that it was." Several memoranda later issued by SSCD (August 8, 1980; October 3, 1980; July 9, 1982) applied this shutdown/reactivation policy.

In the case of Noranda's RLA plant, your staff has provided the following information. The RLA plant, previously owned by Hecla Mining Company, was shut down by Hecla in 1977 due to market conditions. Reports issued by Hecla at the end of 1977 stated that the ALA facility could be operational within one week. However, due to poor economic conditions Hecla decided to terminate their lease for the ALA plant. In 1979 Noranda purchased the facility, but never operated the ALA plant due to similar economic problems; the ALA plant itself has not operated since 1977. The ALA plant was deleted from Noranda's operating permits in 1980, and Noranda's remaining operating permits were surrendered in 1984. In 1986, the ALA plant was removed from the State's emission inventory. Your staff has also indicated that the roaster may need at least several hundred thousand dollars worth of work before being operable, and could not come on line for approximately four months.

Since the ALA plant has been shut down for well over 2 years and has been removed from the State's emission inventory, EPA presumes that the shutdown was permanent. However, Noranda has submitted documentation to Region 9 seeking to demonstrate that the shutdown was not intended to be permanent. Included is a 1980 statement of intent for long term operation of the facility, evidence of some search for toll concentrates of sufficient quality to allow operation, and evidence of some level of custodial maintenance. The question which now arises is whether the information submitted is sufficient to rebut the presumption of a permanent shutdown.

EPA evaluates the permanence of the shutdown based on the demonstrated intent of the owner or operator to reopen the source. Facts and circumstances surrounding the shutdown, including duration of the shutdown and the handling of the shutdown by the source and State, are evidence of the owner's intent. In Noranda's case, the significant amount of time that has elapsed, as well as Noranda's failure to maintain the operating permit, removal of the ALA plant from the emissions inventory, and the time and capital that must be invested in the rehabilitation of the plant in order to make it operable, are evidence that the shutdown was intended to be permanent.

There is not sufficient evidence of intent to reopen the source to regard this as a temporary shutdown. Therefore, SSCD concurs with Region 9's determination that the source, for PSD purposes, is permanently shut down, and must meet Federal PSD requirements for construction and operation.

If You have any questions, please contact Sally M. Farrell at FTS 382- 2875.

cc: Wayne Blackard, Region IX
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