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State to Review Claims of Radioactive Dust From IUC Mill

BY Judy Fahys
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The state Radiation Control Board has promised to look into a complaint that San Juan County residents are sometimes choked by dust blowing off radioactive uranium piles at the International Uranium Corp. recycling mill near Blanding.

The policy advisory panel pledged to give Sierra Club representatives in southeastern Utah time to air their concerns at the board's April 4 meeting, even though regulators have not found evidence to confirm the allegations. They also arranged to have on hand a representative from IUC, which denies the dust comes from its site.

Ken Sleight, chairman of the Glen Canyon Chapter of the Sierra Club, asked for emergency intervention against IUC at a board meeting last week.

He said he would provide photographs and personal testimonies from people who worry that they are breathing radiation-tainted air whenever wind storms blow across the dusty southeastern Utah landscape.

"We continually eat this stuff, breathe this stuff," said Sleight. "Here we are, getting zapped," he added. "I ask you, what are you going to do about it? "

Sleight said he has not gotten any response on the subject from Gov. Mike Leavitt or the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, which oversees the IUC mill. But state and federal regulators say they have investigated the tainted-dust claims and found neither dust nor radiation escaping from IUC.

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"We have responded to each and every one of

and every one of those" complaints, said NRC project manager Bill Von Till. "Our inspectors have concluded there is no problem with the ore material stored at the mill."

IUC President Ron Hochstein rejected the idea that the mill was responsible for the dust and noted state and federal regulators have confirmed that view. Air quality monitoring devices at the mill show no increased levels of radiation.

"When you are actually at the mill site," he said, "there is no dust coming off the piles."

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