

MINUTE ITEM  
This Calendar Item No. 23  
was approved as Minute Item  
No. 23 by the State Lands  
Commission by a vote of 9  
to 0 at its 8-20-87  
meeting.

CALENDAR ITEM

A 34

23

08/20/87

W 40525 PRC 7120

S 25

Pelka

APPROVAL OF A GROUNDWATER MONITORING/SAMPLING PERMIT  
INYO COUNTY

APPLICANT: United States Geological Survey  
Water Resources Division  
Box 25046, Mail Stop 421  
Lakewood, Colorado 80225

AGENT: John B. Czarnecki  
Hydrologist  
United States Geological Survey  
Water Resources Division  
Box 25046, Mail Stop 421  
Lakewood, Colorado 80225

PROPOSED AUTHORIZATION:  
Approval of a groundwater monitoring/sampling  
permit for five years on approximately  
2,557.067 acres of land, more or less, located  
in Inyo County.

CONSIDERATION:  
Filing Fee of \$25.00.  
Additional fees are waived due to the public  
benefit of scientific information which will  
result from the project.

TYPE LAND AND LOCATION:  
Parcel 1: 640 acres, more or less; State school land,  
Section 16, T24N, R5E, SBM, Inyo County,  
approximately six miles south of Death Valley  
Junction.  
Parcel 2: 637.067 acres, more or less; State school land,  
Section 36, T25N, R5E, SBM, Inyo County,  
excepting power line right-of-way easement,  
approximately three miles southeast of Death  
Valley Junction.

CALENDAR ITEM NO. 23 (CONT'D)

Parcel 3: 640 acres, more or less; State school land, Section 16, T25N, R4E, SBM, Inyo County, approximately eight miles west of Death Valley Junction.

Parcel 4: 640 acres, more or less; State school land, Section 36, T25N, R4E, SBM, Inyo County, approximately five miles southwest of Death Valley Junction.

**PROPOSED PROJECT:**

The Water Resources Division of the United States Geological Survey proposes to conduct groundwater monitoring and sampling in the project area to determine origin and movement of local groundwater and gather information relative to the suitability and quantity of groundwater for consumptive use. This data is considered essential by the U.S.G.S. for a potential site study of a high-level nuclear-waste repository near Yucca Mountain, Nevada. The U.S.G.S. proposes to convert 21 mineral exploration drillholes to be drilled by the U.S. Borax & Chemical Corporation under existing mineral prospecting permits to groundwater monitoring/sampling wells.

Each conversion will involve the installation of 20 feet of 6 inch PUC surface casing to prevent caving at the surface. This conversion will occur immediately upon the completion of drilling by U.S. Borax. Prior to installation of the casing, standard geophysical logs will be run. One hole located in Section 36, T25N, R5E, will be outfitted with 2 piezometers which will facilitate temperature logging and water sampling for hydrochemical analyses of both deep and shallow groundwater. The remaining 20 wells without piezometers will still permit water-level measurements and possible water sampling.

Monitoring and sampling is scheduled to continue until 1992 at least once a year and at most once a month, at which time casing in each hole will either be removed or cut off below land surface. Each remaining hole will then be properly abandoned.

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CALENDAR ITEM NO. 23 (CONT'D)

TERM: Five Years.

STATUTORY REFERENCES:

- A. P.R.C.: Div. 6, Section 6501.1.
- B. Cal. Adm. Code: Title 2, Section 2000.

AB 884: 11/09/87.

OTHER PERTINENT INFORMATION:

1. Pursuant to the Commission's delegation of authority and the State CEQA Guidelines (14 Cal. Adm. Code 15025), the staff has prepared a proposed Negative Declaration identified as EIR ND 416, State Clearinghouse 87060106; such proposed negative declaration was prepared and circulated for public review pursuant to the provisions of the CEQA. A copy of the environmental document is attached as Exhibit "C".

Based upon the initial study, the proposed Negative Declaration, and the comments received in response thereto, there is no substantial evidence that the project will have a significant effect on the environment (14 Cal. Adm. Code 15074(B)).

2. This activity involves lands (Parcel 2) identified as possessing significant environmental values pursuant to P.R.C. 6370 et. seq. Based upon the staff's consultation with the persons nominating such lands and through the CEQA review process, it is the staff's opinion that the project, as proposed, is consistent with its use classification.

APPROVALS OBTAINED: The subject permit application and form have been approved by the Office of the Attorney General as to compliance with the applicable provisions of the law.

EXHIBITS:

- A. Land Description.
- B. Site Map.
- C. Negative Declaration.

CALENDAR ITEM NO. 23 (CONT'D)

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE COMMISSION:

1. CERTIFY THAT A NEGATIVE DECLARATION EIR NO 416, STATE CLEARINGHOUSE 87060106, WAS PREPARED FOR THIS PROJECT PURSUANT TO THE PROVISIONS OF THE CEQA AND THAT THE COMMISSION HAS REVIEWED AND CONSIDERED THE INFORMATION CONTAINED THEREIN.
2. DETERMINE THAT THE PROJECT, AS PROPOSED, WILL NOT HAVE A SIGNIFICANT EFFECT ON THE ENVIRONMENT.
3. FIND THAT THIS ACTIVITY IS CONSISTENT WITH THE USE CLASSIFICATION DESIGNATED FOR THE LAND PURSUANT TO P.R.C. 6370, ET. SEQ.
4. AUTHORIZE THE ISSUANCE OF A GROUNDWATER MONITORING/SAMPLING PERMIT TO THE UNITED STATES GEOLOGICAL SURVEY-WATER RESOURCES DIVISION FOR A TERM OF FIVE YEARS ON (I) SECTION 16, T24N, R5E, SBM, INYO COUNTY; (II) SECTION 36 T25N, R5E SBM, INYO COUNTY EXCEPTING A 2.933-ACRE RIGHT-OF-WAY EASEMENT; (III) SECTION 16, T25N, R4E, SBM, INYO COUNTY; (IV) SECTION 36, T25N, R4E, SBM, INYO COUNTY, CONTAINING APPROXIMATELY 2,557 ACRES, MORE OR LESS.

EXHIBIT "A"

LAND DESCRIPTION

W 40525

Four parcels of California State school lands in Inyo County, California, described as follows:

PARCEL 1

Section 16, T24N, R5E, SBM.

PARCEL 2

Section 36, T25N, R5E, SBM.

EXCEPTING THEREFROM any portion lying within State Lands Commission Lease PRC 3466.

PARCEL 3

Section 16, T25N, R4E, SBM.

PARCEL 4

Section 36, T25N, R4E, SBM.

END OF DESCRIPTION

PREPARED JULY 7, 1987, BY BIU 1.

0517b

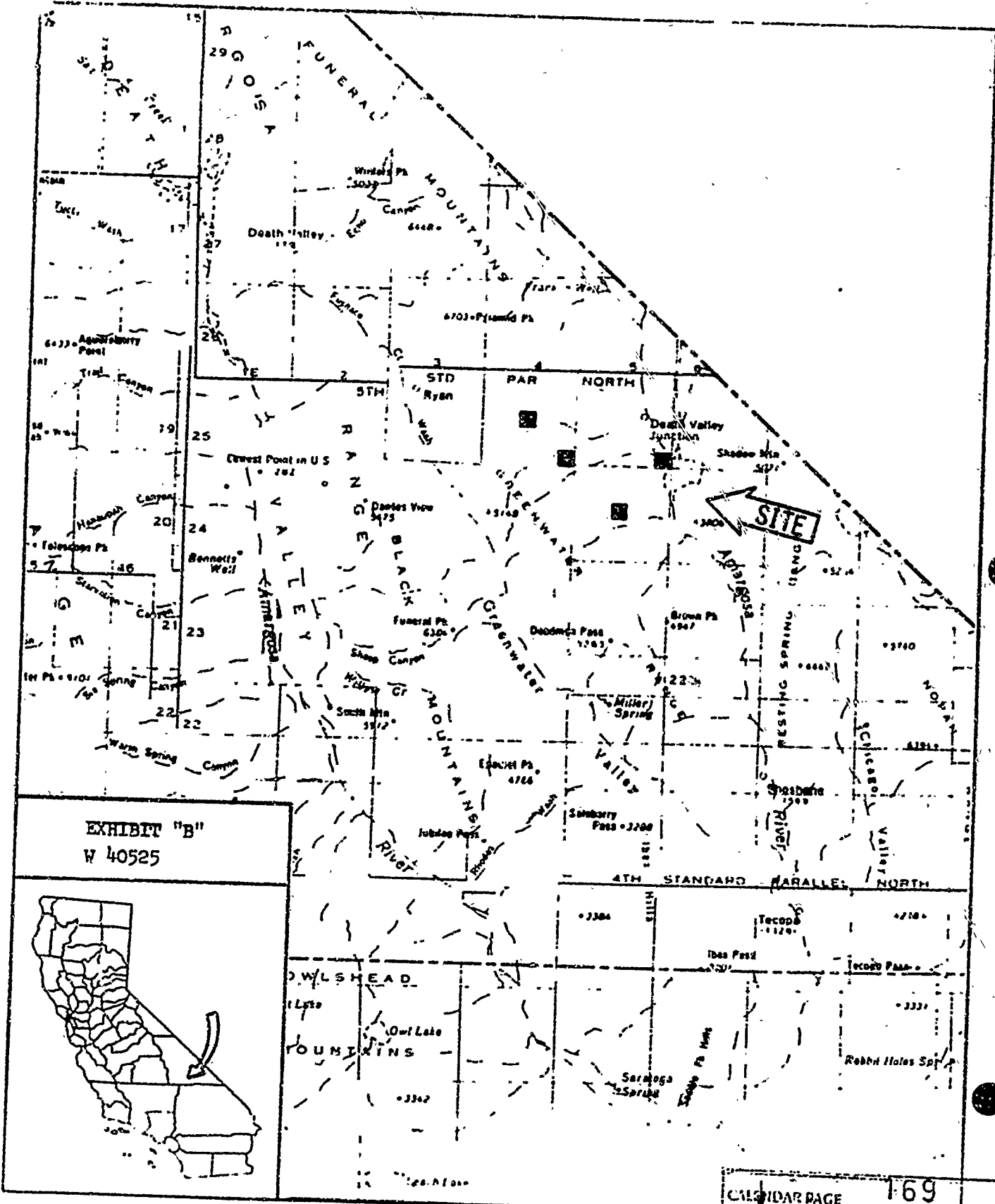


EXHIBIT "B"  
W 40525



PROPOSED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

FIR NO. 116

File Ref.: # 455

SCH#: 8716 0100

Project Title: GROUNDWATER MONITORING/SAMPLING PERMIT - Death Valley Junction Area

Project Proponent: United States Geological Survey-Water Resources Division

Project Location: Section 16, T.24 N., R.5 E.; Sections 16 and 36, T.25 N., R.4 E.; and Section 36, T.25 N., R.5 E.; all of S.B.M., Inyo County.

**Project Description:**

The applicant will convert 21 mineral exploration drillholes to groundwater monitoring/sampling wells. Each conversion will involve the installation of 20 feet of 6 inch PVC surface casing. One hole will be outfitted with additional 2 inch steel casing and 1½ inch PVC casing. Geophysical logging will be performed prior to casing installation. Upon completion of 5 years of monitoring/sampling, the wells be abandoned.

(NOTE: The mineral exploration portion of this project was reviewed under SCH# 8791 1997, copy attached)

Contact Person: TED T. FUKUSHIMA

Telephone: (916)322-7813

This document is prepared pursuant to the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (Section 21000 et seq., Public Resources Code), the State CEQA Guidelines (Section 15000 et seq., Title 14, California Administrative Code), and the State Lands Commission regulations (Section 2901 et seq., Title 2, California Administrative Code).

Based upon the attached Initial Study, it has been found that:

the project will not have a significant effect on the environment.

mitigation measures included in the project will avoid potentially significant effects.

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## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Water Resources Division of the United States Geological Survey has applied to the State Lands Commission for a ground water monitoring and sampling permit in the Death Valley Junction area. The U.S.G.S. desires to monitor ground water altitudes and perform water sampling to determine origin and movement of local ground water and gather information relative to the suitability and quantity of ground water for consumptive use. The State Lands Commission is currently processing four mineral prospecting permit applications for United States Borax and Chemical Corporation in the Death Valley Junction area. The U.S.G.S. desires to convert each of U.S. Borax's exploration drillholes to monitor/sampling wells. The conversion will take place immediately upon the completion of drilling by U.S. Borax. Each exploration hole will be converted to a monitor/sampling well by the installation of 20 feet of 6 inch PVC surface casing to prevent caving at the surface. Inside one hole located in Section 36, T25N, R5E, S8M, 2 inch steel casing will be installed to the total depth of the hole (see figure 1, attached). The top of the casing will be equipped with a threaded endcap secured with a pipe wrench. Installation of the 2" steel casing will be performed by the U.S. Borax drilling contractor as soon after the hole is drilled as possible. Prior to installation of the casing, standard geophysical logs will be run using sensing tools lowered down the open borehole by cable using a geophysical logging truck (six wheel vehicle, up to 10 ton). Once the steel casing is installed, water will be flushed down the casing, out the well screen, and up the annular space to remove drilling mud and to permit entry of backfilling materials. Backfill material will consist of bentonite pellets or chips and pea gravel. The gravel will be hauled and installed using a six-wheeled dump truck. All access to drillhole sites will be on preexisting roads.

In addition to the 2" steel casing, 1-1/4" PVC casing will be installed to a depth 40 feet below the water table measured in the borehole annular space. This plastic pipe will be initially secured to the 2" steel pipe until the annular space can be backfilled with gravel and bentonite pellets. Assembly and installation of the plastic pipe will be performed by USGS personnel and will require use of a 4 wheel drive pickup truck and a 4 wheeled pipe trailer.

All other drill holes to be drilled by U.S. Borax will be instrumented with 6" PVC surface casing to a depth of 20 feet but without additional steel or 1-1/4" PVC casing. These holes will still permit water-level measurement, and possible water sampling, but will be left open to the surface.

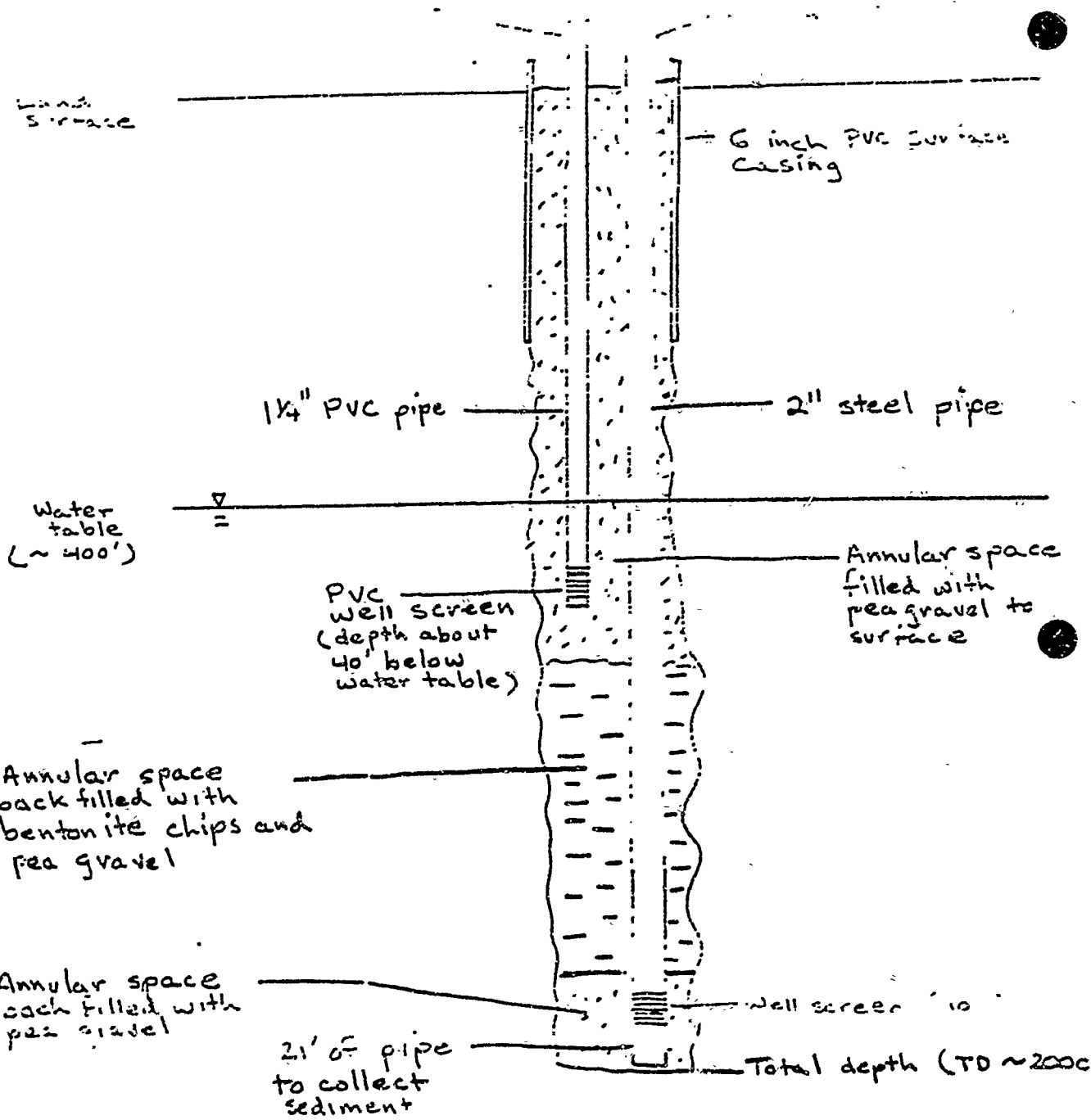


To date no vandalism has occurred to other monitor wells capped with threaded steel or plastic endcaps located on adjacent BLM lands. If this were to become a problem, locking endcaps are available and could be installed. Because of the remoteness of these areas, vandalism is not considered to be a major problem.

Monitoring of water levels is scheduled to continue until 1992 at least once a year and at most once a month, at which time casing in each hole will either be removed or cut off below land surface. The remaining hole will be backfilled with concrete to a depth 50 feet below land surface. If casing is pulled (which may be impossible) it will require a truck with either a boom or a mast, equipped with a cable and hoist.

Attached please find Section C; Assessment of Environmental Impacts completed by the USGS. The staff of the Commission believes that the ground water monitoring/sampling activities proposed by the USGS will not have a significant effect on the environment.

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Not to scale

**SECTION C: ASSESSMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS**

All phases of a project, such as planning, acquisition, development and operation, shall be considered with respect to its impact on the environment. Please answer the following questions by checking "yes", "maybe" or "no". Discuss all items checked "yes" or "maybe" on additional sheets.

Will the project involve

	YES	MAYBE	NO
1. A change in existing features of any bays, tidelands, beaches, lakes or hills, or substantial alteration of ground contours? . . . . .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2. A change in scenic views from existing residential areas or public lands or roads? . . . . .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3. A change in pattern, scale or character of the general area of the project? . . . . .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4. Significant effect on plant or animal life? . . . . .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5. Significant amounts of solid waste or litter? . . . . .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
6. A change in dust, ash, smoke, fumes or odors in the vicinity? . . . . .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
7. A change in ocean, bay, lake, stream or ground water quality or quantity, or an altering of existing drainage patterns? . . . . .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
8. A change in existing noise or vibration levels in the vicinity? . . . . .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
9. Construction on filled land or on a slope of 10 percent or more? . . . . .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
10. Use or disposal of potentially hazardous materials such as toxic or radioactive substances, flammables or explosives? . . . . .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
11. A change in the use of land? . . . . .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
12. Increase in fossil fuel consumption (e.g., electricity, oil, natural gas)? . . . . .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
13. A larger project or a series of projects? . . . . .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**Signature and Certification**

All statements contained above on the attached application form and related exhibits are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief and are submitted under penalty of perjury.

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MINUTE PAGE	2,74

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

A Applicant United States Geological Survey  
Water Resources Division  
Box 25046, Mail Stop 421  
Lakewood, CO 80225

B Checklist Date 6 / 3 / 87

C Contact Person Ted T. Fukushima  
 Telephone ( 916 ) 322-7813

D Purpose. To perform groundwater monitoring/sampling to determine origin and movement of local groundwater relative to the suitability and quantity for consumptive use.

E Location. Section 16, T.24 N., R.5 E.; Sections 16 and 36, T.25 N., R.4 E.; and Section 3 T.25 N., R.5 E.; all of S.B.M., Inyo County.

F Description See attached "PROJECT DESCRIPTION"

G Persons Contacted:

**II. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS. (Explain all "yes" and "maybe" answers)**

A Earth	Will the proposal result in	Yes	Maybe	No
1.	Unstable earth conditions or changes in geologic substructures?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2.	Disruptions, displacements, compaction, or overcovering of the soil?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3.	Change in topography or ground surface relief features?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4.	The destruction, covering, or modification of any unique geologic or physical features?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5.	Any increase in wind or water erosion of soils, either on or off the site?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

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- Will the proposal result in:
1. Changes in the currents or the course or direction of water movements, in either marine or fresh waters?
  2. Changes in absorption rates, drainage patterns, or the rate and amount of surface water runoff?
  3. Alterations to the course or flow of flood waters?
  4. Change in the amount of surface water in any water body?
  5. Discharge into surface waters, or in any alteration of surface water quality, including but not limited to temperature, dissolved oxygen or turbidity?
  6. Alteration of the direction or rate of flow of ground waters?
  7. Change in the quantity of ground waters, either through direct additions or withdrawals, or through interception of an aquifer by cuts or excavations?
  8. Substantial reduction in the amount of water otherwise available for public water supplies?
  9. Exposure of people or property to water-related hazards such as flooding or tidal waves?
  10. Significant changes in the temperature, flow or chemical content of surface thermal springs?
- D. Plant Life.** Will the proposal result in:
1. Change in the diversity of species, or number of any species of plants (including trees, shrubs, grass, crops, and aquatic plants)?
  2. Reduction of the numbers of any unique, rare or endangered species of plants?
  3. Introduction of new species of plants into an area, or in a barrier to the normal replenishment of existing species?
  4. Reduction in acreage of any agricultural crop?
- E. Animal Life.** Will the proposal result in:
1. Change in the diversity of species, or numbers of any species of animals (birds, land animals including reptiles, fish and shellfish, benthic organisms, or insects)?
  2. Reduction of the numbers of any unique, rare or endangered species of animals?
  3. Introduction of new species of animals into an area, or result in a barrier to the migration or movement of animals?
  4. Deterioration to existing fish or wildlife habitat?
- F. Noise.** Will the proposal result in:
1. Increase in existing noise levels?
  2. Exposure of people to more noise levels?
- G. Light and Glare.** Will the proposal result in:
1. The production of new light or glare?
- H. Land Use.** Will the proposal result in:
1. A substantial alteration of the present or planned land use of an area?
- I. Natural Resources.** Will the proposal result in:
1. Increase in the rate of use of any natural resources?
  2. Substantial depletion of any nonrenewable resources?

2. ... with emergency response plan or an emergency evacuation plan?

**X. Population** Will the proposal result in:

1. The alteration, distribution, density, or growth rate of the human population of the area?

**L. Housing** Will the proposal result in:

1. Affecting existing housing, or create a demand for additional housing?

**M. Transportation/Circulation** Will the proposal result in:

1. Generation of substantial additional vehicular movement?

2. Affecting existing parking facilities, or create a demand for new parking?

3. Substantial impact upon existing transportation systems?

4. Alterations to present patterns of circulation or movement of people and/or goods?

5. Alterations to waterborne, rail, or air traffic?

6. Increase in traffic hazards to motor vehicles, bicyclists, or pedestrians?

**N. Public Services** Will the proposal have an effect upon, or result in a need for new or altered governmental services in any of the following areas:

1. Fire protection?

2. Police protection?

3. Schools?

4. Parks and other recreational facilities?

5. Maintenance of public facilities, including roads?

6. Other governmental services?

**O. Energy** Will the proposal result in:

1. Use of substantial amounts of fuel or energy?

2. Substantial increase in demand upon existing sources of energy, or require the development of new sources?

**P. Utilities** Will the proposal result in a need for new systems, or substantial alterations to the following utilities:

1. Power or natural gas?

2. Communication systems?

3. Water?

4. Sewer or septic tanks?

5. Storm water drainage?

6. Solid waste and disposal?

**Q. Human Health** Will the proposal result in:

1. Creation of any health hazard or potential health hazard (excluding mental health)?

2. Exposure of people to potential health hazards?

**R. Aesthetics** Will the proposal result in:

1. The obstruction of any scenic vista or view open to the public, or will the proposal result in the creation of an aesthetically offensive site open to public view?

**S. Recreation** Will the proposal result in:

1. An impact upon the quality or quantity of existing recreational opportunities?

- 2. Will the project have the potential to cause a physical change which would affect a prehistoric or historic building, structure or object?
- 3. Does the proposal have the potential to cause a physical change which would affect unique ethnic cultural values?
- 4. Will the proposal restrict existing religious or sacred uses within the potential impact area?

**U Mandatory Findings of Significance.**

- 1. Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?
- 2. Does the project have the potential to achieve short-term, to the disadvantage of long-term, environmental goals?
- 3. Does the project have impacts which are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable?
- 4. Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?

**III. DISCUSSION OF ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION (See Comments Attached)**

**IV. PRELIMINARY DETERMINATION**

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

- I find the proposed project **COULD NOT** have a significant effect on the environment, and a **NEGATIVE DECLARATION** will be prepared.
- I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because the mitigation measures described on an attached sheet have been added to the project. A **NEGATIVE DECLARATION** will be prepared.
- I find the proposed project **MAY** have a significant effect on the environment, and an **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT** is required.

Date: 6 / 3 / 87

For the State Land Commission  
 178  
 MINUTE PAGE  
 2778

STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
SACRAMENTO COUNTY

NEGATIVE DECLARATION

EIR NO 414

File Ref.: W 40505, W 40511,  
W 40514, W 40519  
SCH#: 8701 1907

Project Title: FOUR MINERAL PROSPECTING PERMITS - DEATH VALLEY JUNCTION AREA

Project Proponent: United States Borax & Chemical Corporation

Project Location: W 40505: Sec. 16, T.24 N., R.5 E.; W 40511: Sec. 36, T.25 N., R.5 E.;  
W 40514: Sec. 16, T.25 N., R.4 E.; W 40519: Sec. 36, T.25 N., R.4 E.,  
all in S.B.M., Inyo County.

Project Description: Prospect for borax and other valuable minerals by drilling up to a maximum of 21 holes, 6 inches in diameter, to a maximum depth of 2,000 feet, along existing roads with a truck mounted drill rig. Remove a 2 to 5 pound sample every ten feet for off-site assaying. Properly abandon drill holes.

Contact Person: TED T. FUKUSHIMA

Telephone: (916)322-7813

This document is prepared pursuant to the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (Section 21000 et seq., Public Resources Code), the State CEQA Guidelines (Section 15000 et seq., Title 14, California Administrative Code), and the State Lands Commission regulation (Section 2901 et seq., Title 2, California Administrative Code).

Based upon the attached Initial Study, it has been found that:

the project will not have a significant effect on the environment.

mitigation measures included in the project will avoid potentially significant effects.

CALIFORNIA PAGE	179
MINUTE PAGE	2779



W 40511  
W 40515  
SCH# 87011907

March 31, 1987

COMMENTS RECEIVED ON INITIAL STUDY AND RESPONSES TO COMMENTS

Inyo County Planning Department

Comments:

"Our Department has reviewed the Initial Study covering U.S. Borax's proposal to conduct mineral exploration on State lands south and west of Death Valley Junction in Inyo County.

It appears from the information provided that a Negative Declaration would be the appropriate environmental document to prepare."

Response:

None required.

Bureau of Land Management-Barstow Resource Area

Comments:

"In our opinion, a negative declaration can be issued for this project. Site W 40505 is within the Greenwater Range WSA (CDCA #147). Site W 40511 is within the Resting Spring Range WSA (CDCA #145). The following stipulations are those that we would apply to public lands for the protection of wilderness values:

1. The drill hole site in W 40511 would be moved several hundred feet to the west side of the old T and T railroad grade. This will place the drill site outside of WSA #145.
2. Authorization from BLM is required prior to improvement of access across public land to site W 40505. The contact person is Daryl Albiston (619) 256-3591.
3. Within W 40505, the following mitigation would be applied:
  - a) No mechanical improvement of existing routes of travel.
  - b) If possible, locate drill pads within existing routes of travel. Pads not located within existing routes of travel should be located in washes. No pads on desert pavement.
  - c) No pad preparation.
  - d) No destruction of perennial vegetation.

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### MITIGATION MEASURES

#### Proposed for Incorporation into the Project Description

1. If safe access can be obtained for drilling equipment and personnel, the drill site within W 40511 will be located several hundred feet west of the originally planned site, which places it west of the old Tonopah and Tidewater railroad grade and outside WSA (CDCA #145).
2. Improvement of any public access other than on State lands should not be performed prior to authorization from the BLM. The contact person at the BLM is Daryl Albiston at (619) 256-3591.
3. Clearing and smoothing with a grader on the State sections shall be restricted to the minimum required to assure safe access for drilling equipment and personnel. No new road construction is permitted. Special consideration should be made on site W 40505, so as not to impair wilderness values within the Greenwater Range WSA (CDCA #147).
4. Permittee shall perform all activities so as to minimize impact on vegetation. No vegetation may be removed.
5. Preparation of any drill pads with mechanized equipment is not permitted.
6. Each drill hole site shall be inspected to determine if burrowing animals are present and would be adversely affected. If potential impacts could occur, prospecting activities should be located where burrows and wildlife would not be adversely affected. The Permittee shall specifically avoid burrowing areas of the desert tortoise, a State protected species.
7. To reduce wildlife mortality and minimize the production of fugitive dust, all vehicle speed shall not exceed 20 mph on dirt roads.
8. Drill holes if dry shall be abandoned by backfilling drill cuttings in the hole. Drill holes penetrating water shall be abandoned by placing a cement plug above the water zone and backfill the remaining hole with drill cuttings. Any drill cuttings remaining after abandonment of each hole shall be spread evenly over the drill site so as to blend with the existing area.

4. Complete all activity by June 30, 1987. This will constrain the recommendation of the BLM, as well as the Interior regarding the suitability of this area for inclusion in the wilderness system.

Compliance with the above stipulations would assure that wilderness values of adjacent public lands are protected."

Responses:

1. See mitigation measure number 1.
2. See mitigation measure number 2.
3. See mitigation measures 3, 4 and 5.  
All drilling will be located within existing routes of travel.
4. If the permitting process proceeds as scheduled, the two year permit will be issued July 1, 1987 and would expire June 30, 1989. Any changes in the environmental setting will be reviewed prior to the issuance of a one year extension.

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MINUTE PAGE	2,82

W 41-11  
W 40511  
W 11514  
W 10619  
870119 7

March 4, 1987

INITIAL STUDY  
INTRODUCTION

United States Borax and Chemical Corporation has applied to the State Lands Commission for four prospecting permits on State lands located near the Lila C Mining District near Death Valley Junction, in southeastern Inyo County, California. The proposed project consists of drilling along existing roads, a maximum of 21 exploratory holes, six inches in diameter, up to a maximum depth of 2000 feet to explore for borate and other valuable minerals. Existing dirt roads used for access will be cleared and smoothed with a grader for the safety of personnel and equipment. Portable mud pits have eliminated the necessity of mud pit excavation. All drill holes shall be properly abandoned upon completion of the drilling of each hole.

The permit when issued, is for a two-year period and may be extended for a maximum of one year.

This initial study consists of an environmental impact assessment checklist, detailed project description, information form response and maps.

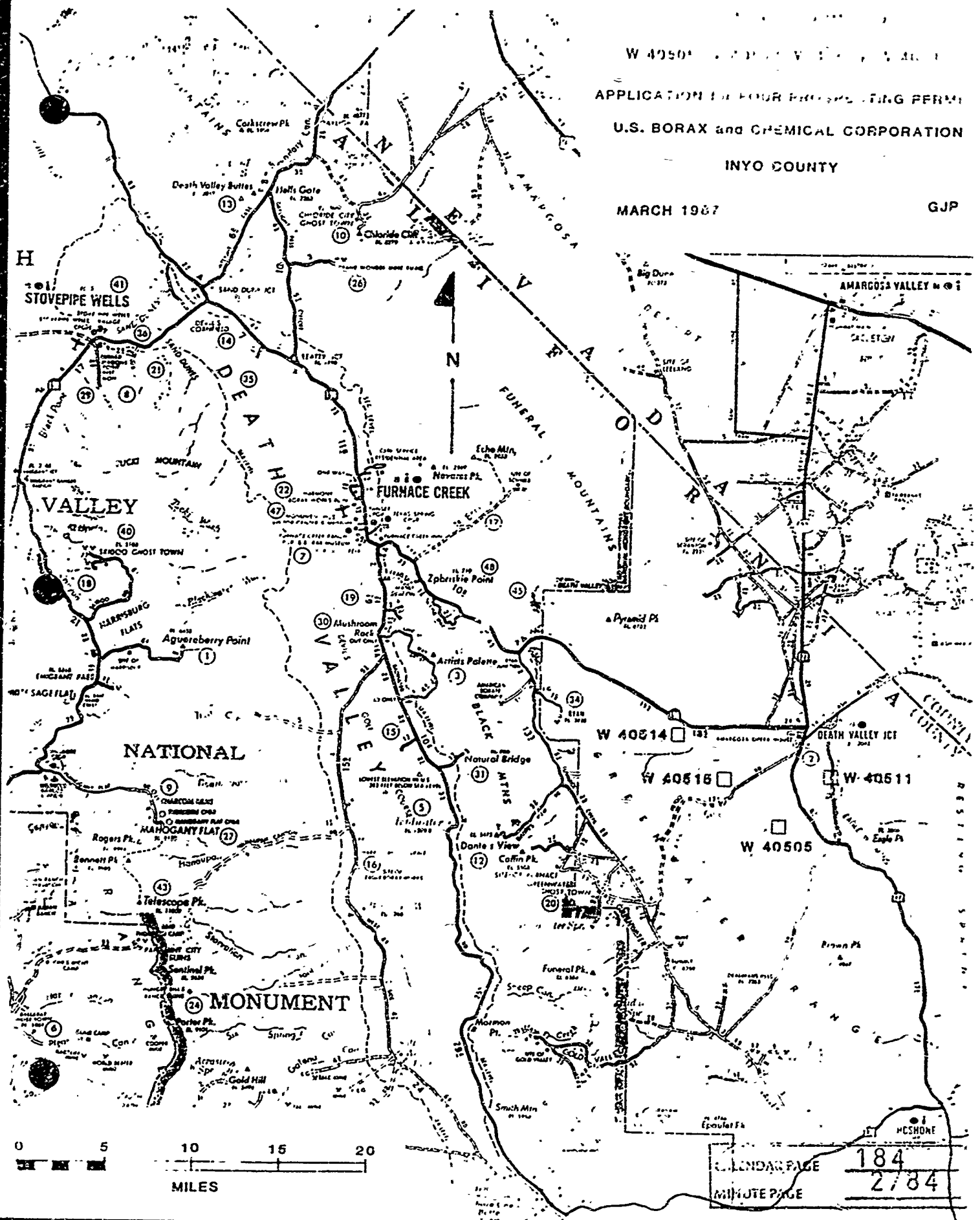
STATE LANDS COMMISSION  
March 1987

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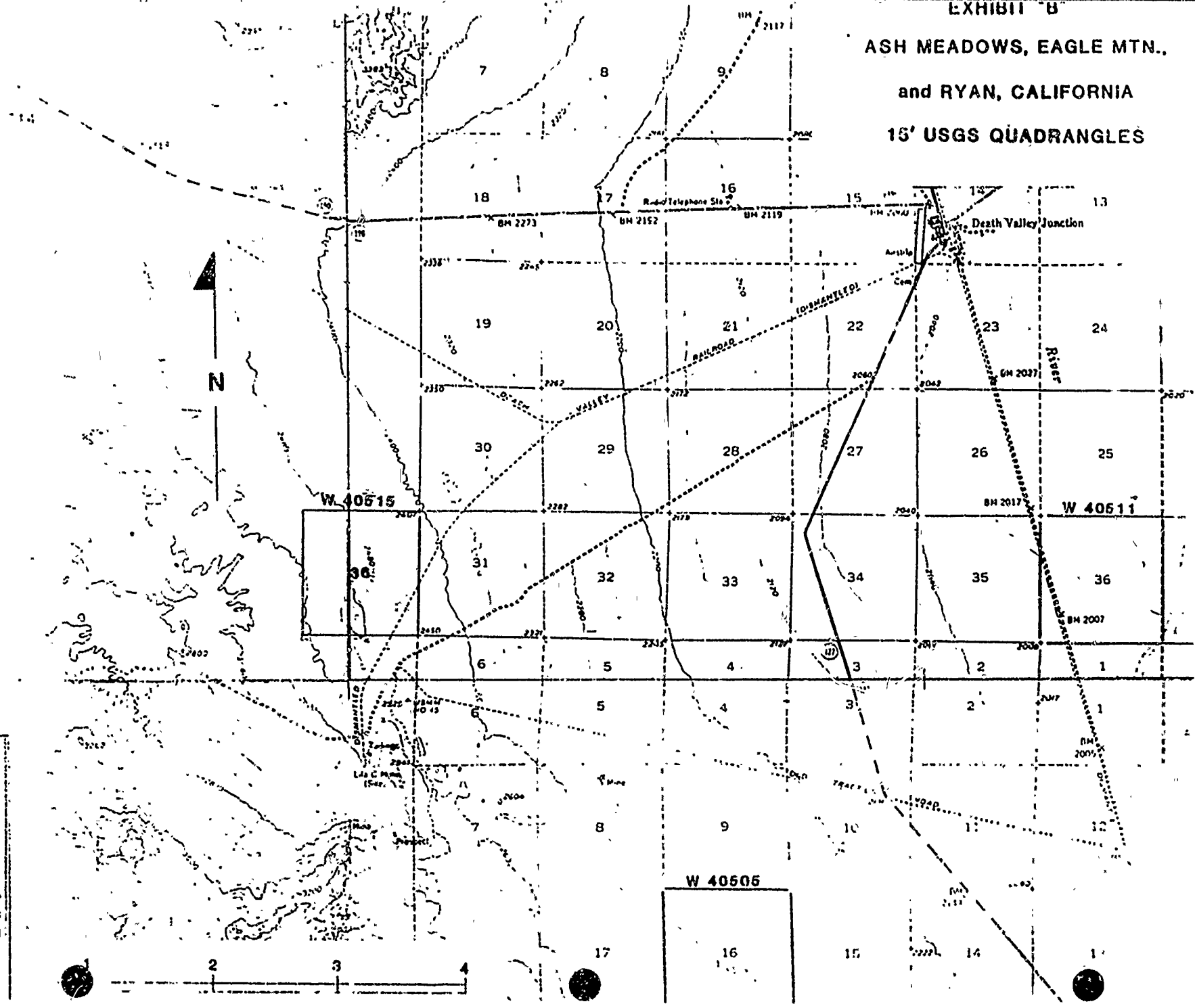
W 40501  
APPLICATION FOR FOUR PROSPECTING PERMITS  
U.S. BORAX and CHEMICAL CORPORATION  
INYO COUNTY

MARCH 1987

GJP



ASH MEADOWS, EAGLE MTN.,  
and RYAN, CALIFORNIA  
15' USGS QUADRANGLES



CALENDAR PAGE 185  
 MINUTE PAGE 2785

EXHIBIT  
W 40005  
4 Drillholes

SECTION 16  
T24N R5E

Drill Hole  
(Proposed)

Drill Hole  
(Proposed)

16

Drill Hole  
(Proposed)

Drill Hole  
(Proposed)

SL 13.2 Road

SL 12.0 Road

AGAR AVENUE

United States Borax & Chemical Corporation  
T24N R5E SBE

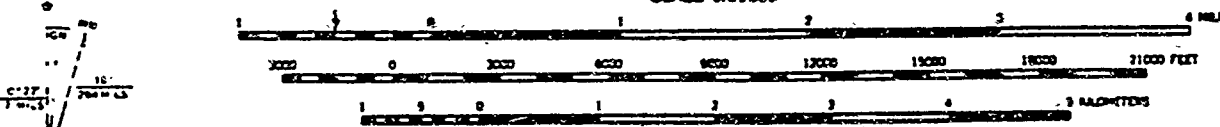
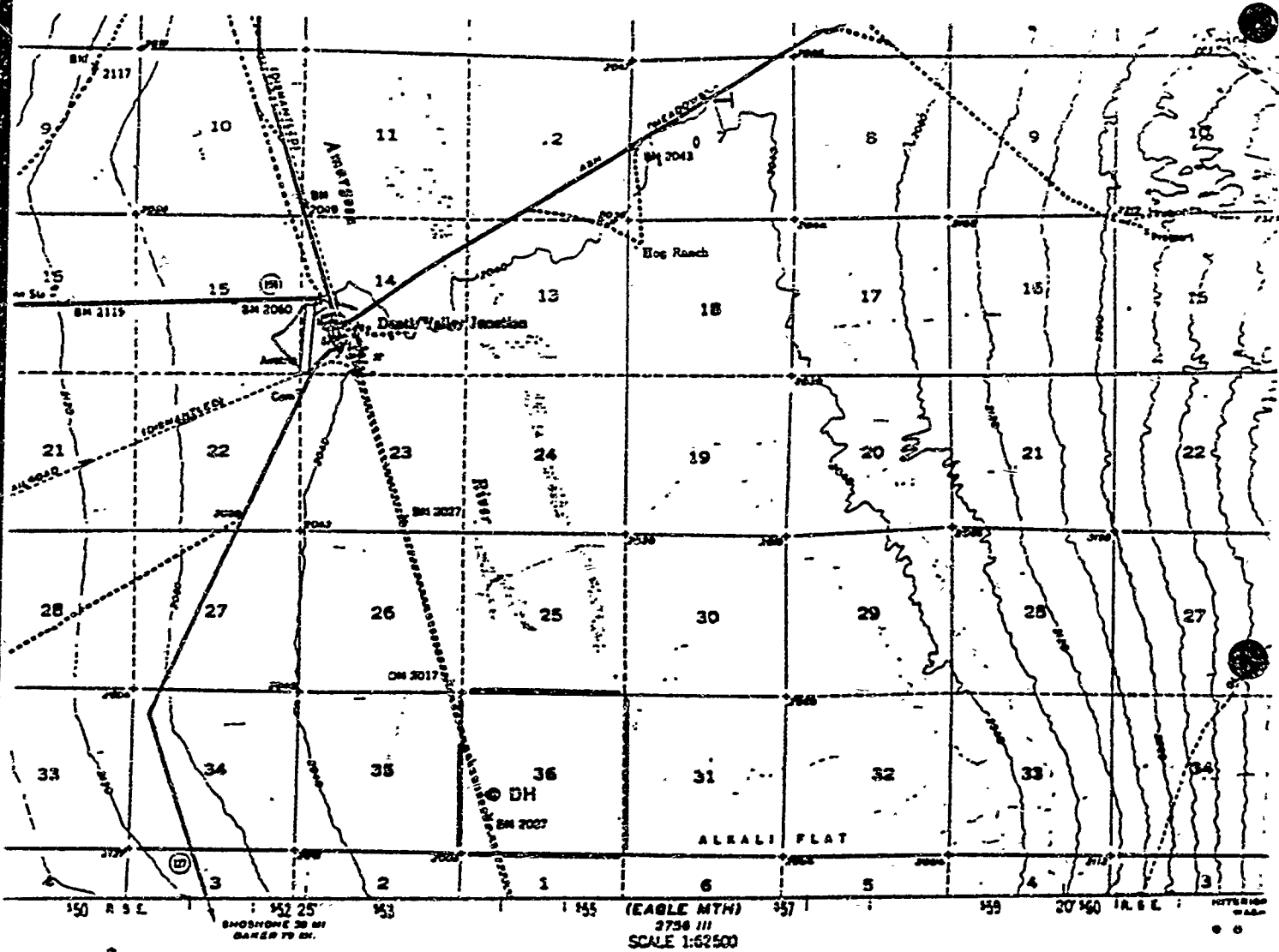
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2,86

AM  
SITE PAGE

EXHIBIT D

W 40511

i Drillhole



CONTOUR INTERVAL 40 FEET  
 DOTTED LINES REPRESENT HALF-INTERVAL CONTOURS  
 DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL

UTM GRID AND 1983 MAGNETIC NORTH  
 DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

Prospecting Permit:

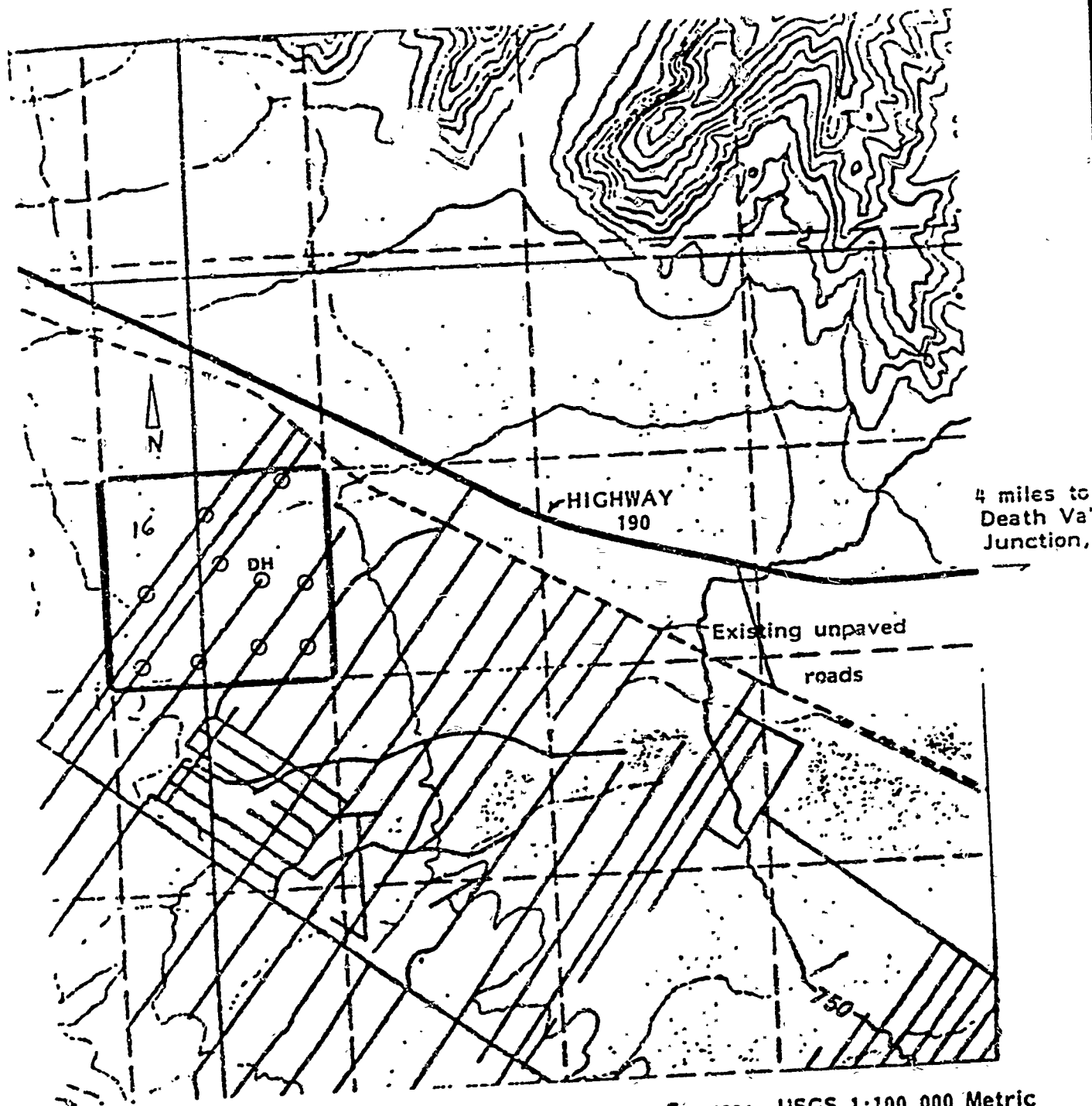
Drill Hole Location Map  
 Section 36, T25N, R5E S.B.B.&M.  
 Revised 12/9/86

ROAD CLASSIFICATION  
 1983  
 Medium-duty ——— Light-duty ———  
 Unimproved dirt .....  
 State Route ○

ASH MEADOWS  
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EXHIBIT E  
W 40514  
10 Drillholes



Source: USGS 1:100,000 Metric  
Topographic Map (1986)

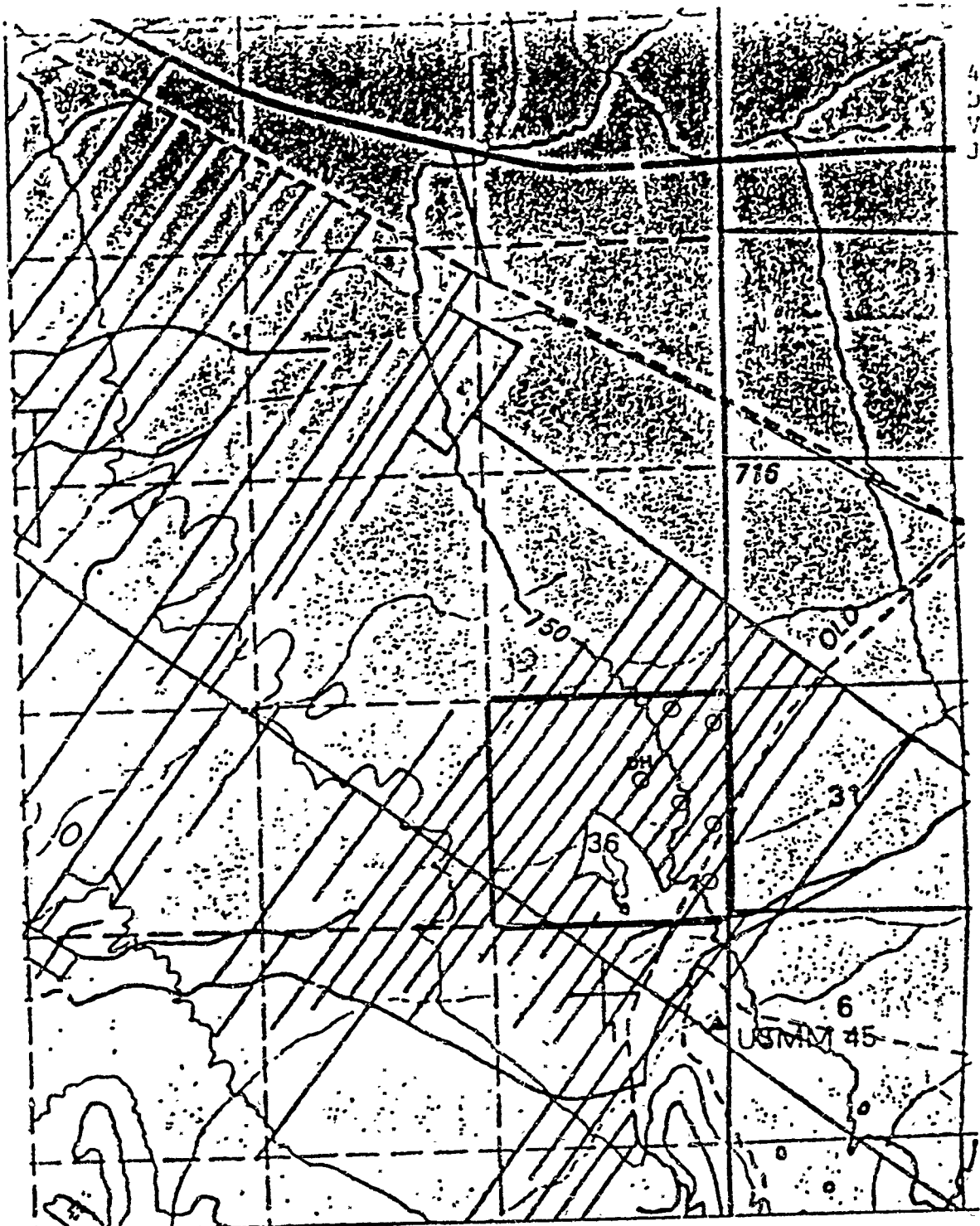
Detailed Location Map: Shirley Project  
Section 16, T25N, R4E, S.B.B.&M.

MAP B (Revised 12/8/86)

W40514

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17 700 10  
1. Contours



4 miles  
Death  
Valley  
Junction  
→

Detail Location Map: Katie C Project  
Section 36, T25N, R4E, S.B.B. & M.

Revised 12/9/86

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W 4050  
W 40511  
W 40514  
W 40515

### DETAILED PROJECT DESCRIPTION

United States Borax & Chemical Corporation proposes to conduct mineral exploration in the four permit areas by drilling up to a maximum of 21 exploratory holes, six inches in diameter, up to 2000 feet deep. All drill holes will be located along existing dirt roads. Please refer to Exhibits 1 and 2 for location of projects. Refer to Exhibits C, D, E and F for individual parcel maps showing location of proposed drill holes and existing roads.

Drill sites will not require leveling an area. Drilling will be accomplished by a truck mounted drill rig such as a Failing 1500 or equivalent. Drilling shall be initiated with a percussion air unit and drilled to total depth unless water is encountered. Upon encountering water, drill mud will be mixed in a portable mud pit and drilling will resume using standard rotary drilling techniques. The drill mud if required, will be made up from naturally occurring bentonite. Any chemical additives will be non-toxic and biodegradable. If drilling encounters significant quantities of swelling clays, a polymer based mud will be utilized. Drill holes shall be sampled by a geologist at approximately ten foot intervals. Two to five pound samples shall be collected from the interval and taken off-site for assaying for a variety of elements.

Accessory equipment includes a water tank, mud pit, desander and shale shaker, all truck mounted. A utility pickup truck and trucks for transportation of personnel shall be utilized. The use of portable mud pits eliminates any excavation for that purpose and further lessens any environmental impacts.

No new road construction will be permitted. To assure safe access for drilling equipment and personnel, existing roads on the State sections may be cleared and smoothed with a grader but not widened.

Surface disturbance shall be minimal since all activities are confined to existing roads. Each hole if drilled to 2,000 feet amounts to a removal of 15 cubic yards. Therefore the maximum excavated volume will be 315 cubic yards for the entire project.

Drill holes, if dry, shall be abandoned by backfilling drill cuttings in the hole. Drill holes penetrating water will be abandoned by placing a cement plug above the water zone and backfilling the remaining hole with drill cuttings. Any drill cuttings remaining after abandonment shall be spread evenly over the drill site so as to blend with the existing area.

Additional mitigation measures proposed by U.S. Borax & Chemical Corporation include:

- 1) Vehicular traffic to be kept to a minimum and at a speed limit of 20 miles per hour to reduce wildlife road mortality.
- 2) All casing pipe, if needed for drilling, will be removed if possible.
- 3) Drill sites will be cleaned of all trash and debris.

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W 40505  
W 40511  
W 40514  
W 40515

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

1. Describe the project site as it exists before commencement of the project. Include information such as topography, soil stability, plants and animals, and any cultural, historical or scenic aspects. Describe any existing structures on the site, the use of the structures, and whether they will be retained or removed.
2. Describe the surrounding properties. Include information such as topography, soil stability, plants and animals, and any cultural, historical or scenic aspects. Indicate the type of land use and intensity of land use of the area.
3. Include a statement of the proposed liquid, solid or gaseous waste disposal methods necessary for the protection and preservation of existing land and water uses.

Applicant Responses:

1. The site is a gradually sloping alluvial surface covered mainly by coarse sand, cobbles, and boulders. The project site is in a desert type environment, typified by low humidity, high/low temperature extremes and low rainfall. Vegetation is primarily sagebrush and greasewood. No sensitive, rare, threatened or endangered plants, fish or wildlife occur on the project site (CDCA Plan, 1980, BLM). There is nothing of special interest on the section regarding animals cultural, historical or scenic aspects. There are no structures on the project site and the only improvements are several graded dirt roads on the section.
2. The surrounding area is a gradually sloping alluvial surface covered mainly by coarse sand, cobbles and boulders. There are no structures on the surrounding area and the only improvements are several graded dirt roads. No sensitive, rare, threatened or endangered plants, fish or wildlife occur in the project area (CDCA Plan, 1937, BLM). The surrounding area is currently being actively explored for gold and other minerals. At least five companies have active exploration efforts in the area. Mining has been and continues to be the major use of the area.
3. A. Some noise and dust will be present in the immediate vicinity of the drill rig during the actual drilling operation.  
B. Should the drill holes penetrate water-bearing rocks, upon abandonment, a cement plug shall be placed above the water-bearing zone, and the remainder of the hole shall be backfilled with cuttings.

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ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST - PART II

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- A. Applicant: United States Fertilizer Corporation  
Plant, Grand Rapids, Michigan  
Attention: Wilson, 45715
- B. Checklist Date 5 / 10 / 67
- C. Contact Person: Gregory J. Telka  
 Telephone (215) 211-5231
- D. Purpose: Prospecting for borate and other valuable minerals.
- E. Location: 440505:Sec 16, T24N, R5E, S38M, Invo Co., 440511:Sec 36, T25N, R5E, S38M, Invo Co.,  
440514:Sec 16, T25N, R1E, S38M, Invo Co., 440515:Sec 36, T25N, R1E, S38M, Invo Co.
- F. Description: Drill up to 21 holes to a maximum depth of 2000 feet along existing roads.  
Remove a 2 to 5 pound sample every ten feet for off site assaying. Properly  
abandon drill holes.
- G. Persons Contacted: \_\_\_\_\_  
Verne Blake - Associate Wildlife Biologist  
Department of Fish and Game  
407 Westline Street, Room 3  
Bishop, CA 93571

II. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS. (Explain all "yes" and "maybe" answers)

A. Earth Will the proposal result in:

- |  | Yes                                 | Maybe                               | No                                  |
|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Unstable earth conditions or changes in geologic substructures? .....                         | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Disruptions, displacements, compaction, or overcovering of the soil? .....                    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| 3. Change in topography or ground surface relief features? .....                                 | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. The destruction, covering, or modification of any unique geologic or physical features? ..... | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Any increase in wind or water erosion of soils, either on or off the site?                    | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |

- b. Changes in deposition or erosion of beach sands or changes in dune deposition or erosion, including the channel of a wet or stream or the bed of the ocean, or any bay or estuary.

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**C. Water** Will the proposal result in:

- 1 Change in the direction, amount, or duration of water movements, in either marine or fresh waters?
- 2 Change in the rate, pattern, or the rate and amount of surface water runoff?
- 3 Alteration in the amount of surface water?
- 4 Change in the amount of surface water in any water body?
- 5 Discharge of surface waters, or in any alteration of surface water quality, including but not limited to temperature, dissolved oxygen or turbidity?
- 6 Alteration in the direction or rate of flow of ground waters?
- 7 Change in the quantity of ground waters either through direct additions or withdrawals, or through interception of an aquifer by cuts or excavations?
- 8 Substantial reduction in the amount of water otherwise available for public water supplies?
- 9 Exposure of people or property to water related hazards such as flooding or tidal waves?
- 10 Significant changes in the temperature, flow or chemical content of surface thermal springs?

**D. Plant Life** Will the proposal result in:

- 1 Change in the diversity of species or number of any species of plants (including trees, shrubs, grass, crops, and aquatic plants)?
- 2 Reduction of the numbers of any unique, rare or endangered species of plants?
- 3 Introduction of new species of plants into an area, or in a barrier to the normal replenishment of existing species?
- 4 Reduction in acreage of any agricultural crop?

**E. Animal Life** Will the proposal result in:

- 1 Change in the diversity of species, or numbers of any species of animals (birds, land animals including reptiles, fish and shellfish, benthic organisms, or insects)?
- 2 Reduction of the numbers of any unique, rare or endangered species of animals?
- 3 Introduction of new species of animals into an area, or result in a barrier to the migration or movement of animals?
- 4 Deterioration to existing fish or wildlife habitat?

**F. Noise** Will the proposal result in:

- 1 Increase in existing noise levels?
- 2 Exposure of people to severe noise levels?

**G. Light and Glare** Will the proposal result in:

- 1 The production of new light or glare?

**H. Land Use** Will the proposal result in:

- 1 A substantial alteration of the present or planned land use of an area?

**I. Natural Resources** Will the proposal result in:

- 1 Increase in the rate of use of any natural resources?
- 2 Substantial depletion of any nonrenewable resources?

K. **Population.** Will the proposal result in:

1. The alteration of distribution, density, or growth rate of the human population of the area?

L. **Housing.** Will the proposal result in:

1. Affecting existing housing or create a demand for additional housing?

M. **Transportation/Circulation.** Will the proposal result in:

1. Generation of substantial additional vehicular movement?

2. Affecting existing parking facilities, or create a demand for new parking?

3. Substantial impact upon existing transportation systems?

4. Alterations to present patterns of circulation or movement of people and/or goods?

5. Alterations to waterborne, rail, or air traffic?

6. Increase in traffic hazards to motor vehicles, bicyclists, or pedestrians?

N. **Public Services.** Will the proposal have an effect upon, or result in a need for new or altered governmental services in any of the following areas:

1. Fire protection?

2. Police protection?

3. Schools?

4. Parks and other recreational facilities?

5. Maintenance of public facilities, including roads?

6. Other governmental services?

O. **Energy.** Will the proposal result in:

1. Use of substantial amounts of fuel or energy?

2. Substantial increase in demand upon existing sources of energy, or require the development of new sources?

P. **Utilities.** Will the proposal result in a need for new systems, or substantial alterations to the following utilities:

1. Power or natural gas?

2. Communication systems?

3. Water?

4. Sewer or septic tanks?

5. Storm water drainage?

6. Solid waste and disposal?

Q. **Human Health.** Will the proposal result in:

1. Creation of any health hazard or potential health hazard (excluding mental health)?

2. Exposure of people to potential health hazards?

R. **Aesthetics.** Will the proposal result in:

1. The obstruction of any scenic vista or view open to the public, or will the proposal result in the creation of an aesthetically offensive site open to public view?

S. **Recreation.** Will the proposal result in:

1. Affecting the availability of existing recreational facilities?



Structure of site?

- 3 Does the proposal have the potential for physical change which would affect unique ethnic/cultural values?
- 4 Will the proposal affect existing religious or sacred uses within the potential impact area?

**U Mandatory Findings of Significance**

- 1 Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?
- 2 Does the project have the potential to achieve short term, to the disadvantage of long-term, environmental goals?
- 3 Does the project have impacts which are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable?
- 4 Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?

**III. DISCUSSION OF ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION (See Comments Attached)**

See attached discussion of environmental evaluation, environmental setting and detailed project description.

**IV. PRELIMINARY DETERMINATION**

On the basis of this initial evaluation

- I find the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because the mitigation measures described on an attached sheet have been added to the project. A NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- I find the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.

Date: / /

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W 40505  
W 40511  
W 40514  
W 40515

### III. Discussion of Environmental Evaluation

A 2. Disruption, displacement, compaction and overcovering of the soil will occur in the immediate vicinity of the drill sites. All drill sites will be cleaned of all trash and debris and all drill holes will be backfilled. A minimum amount of disruption and compaction of the soil will occur when the drilling equipment is moved on and off a site.

A 5. An increase in wind and water erosion of the disturbed soil at the drill sites will take place during wind and rain storms.

A 6. Should the drill holes penetrate water bearing rocks, upon abandonment a cement plug shall be placed above the water bearing zone, and the remainder of the hole shall be backfilled with cuttings.

F 1. The operating drill rig and accessory activities will temporarily increase the existing noise levels.

The four State sections and surrounding vicinity are designated "Open-Space - 40 acres" by the Inyo County Planning and Zoning Department.

The area surrounding the four State parcels is used predominantly for mineral exploration. The parcels are in part being prospected for their close proximity to the Lila C Mine which produced borates currently valued in excess of \$50 million.

Parcel W 40505 is bounded entirely by the Bureau of Land Management Wilderness Study Area (WSA) - 147 (Greenwater Range). Parcel W 40511 is bordered on the east by BLM WSA - 145 (Resting Spring Range). The other two parcels are not within or adjacent to BLM Wilderness Study Areas.

Parcel W 40511 is crossed by the old railroad grade of the Tonopah and Tidewater RR. All track and ties have been removed. The northeast quarter of parcel W 40514 is crossed by the old Death Valley Railroad grade. The southeast quarter of parcel W 40515 is crossed by an old railroad grade which once connected the Lila C Mine to the Death Valley Railroad.

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Additional mitigation measures proposed by the staff of the State Lands Commission include the following.

1. Access routes and areas of surface disturbance shall be inspected to determine if burrowing animals are present and would be adversely affected. If potential impacts could occur, prospecting activities shall be located where burrows and wildlife would not be adversely affected. The project operator should specifically avoid burrowing areas of the desert tortoise, a State protected species.
2. Diversion of the natural flow or changes in the channel, bed or banks of any river, stream, or lake will require notification to the Department of Fish and Game as called for in the Fish and Game code. This notification (with fee) and the subsequent agreement must be completed prior to initiating any such changes. Notification should be made after the project is approved by the lead agency.
3. Permittee shall perform all activities so as to minimize impact on vegetation. No vegetation may be removed.
4. Upon abandonment, if casing can not be removed from the hole for any reason, the casing shall be cut 5' below ground level and a 20' plug of impervious material shall be placed at the top of the hole. Suitable impervious materials include neat cement, sand-cement grout, concrete and bentonite clay.
5. Permittee shall notify the staff of the State Lands Commission two weeks prior to commencing operations.

SECTION B: ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

All projects involving the following activities shall be subject to the provisions of this section. Projects involving the following activities shall be subject to the provisions of this section. Discuss items marked "yes" or "maybe" or "no".

Will the project involve	YES	MAYBE	NO
1. A change in existing features of any bays, tidelands, beaches, lakes or hills or substantial alteration of ground contours? . . . . .	[ ]	[ ]	[X]
2. A change in scenic views from existing residential areas or public lands or roads? . . . . .	[ ]	[ ]	[X]
3. A change in pattern, scale or character of the general area of the project? . . . . .	[ ]	[ ]	[X]
4. Significant effect on plant or animal life? . . . . .	[ ]	[ ]	[X]
5. Significant amounts of solid waste or litter? . . . . .	[ ]	[ ]	[X]
6. A change in dust, ash, smoke, fumes or odors in the vicinity? . . . . .	[ ]	[X]	[ ]
7. A change in ocean, bay, lake, stream or ground water quality or quantity, or an altering of existing drainage patterns? . . . . .	[ ]	[ ]	[X]
8. A change in existing noise or vibration levels in the vicinity? . . . . .	[ ]	[X]	[ ]
9. Construction on filled land or on a slope of 10 percent or more? . . . . .	[ ]	[ ]	[X]
10. Use or disposal of potentially hazardous materials such as toxic or radioactive substances, flammables or explosives? . . . . .	[ ]	[ ]	[X]
11. A change in demand for municipal services (e.g., police, fire, water, sewage)? . . . . .	[ ]	[ ]	[X]
12. Increase in fossil fuel consumption (e.g., electricity, oil, natural gas)? . . . . .	[ ]	[ ]	[X]
13. A larger project or a series of projects? . . . . .	[ ]	[X]	[ ]

SECTION C: ASSESSMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Discuss items 6, 8 and 13 answered "maybe."

6 & 8: Some dust, fumes and noise will be present in the immediate vicinity of the drill rig during operations.

13: An open pit or underground mine might be developed at this site.

PART V  
CERTIFICATION

I certify that all information and materials furnished in this application are true and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief. I recognize that this application and the project it addresses are subject to the laws of the State of California, and the regulations and discretionary policies of the State Lands Commission.

Applicant: United States Borax & Chemical Corporation Date: 10-2-86

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Agent: Michael H. Rauschkolb Date: 10-2-86

Title: Michael H. Rauschkolb  
Land Agent, Land Department

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