U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

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Moab UMTRA Project Debuts Longest Train to Date

(Grand Junction, CO) — The U.S. Department of Energy's Moab Uranium Mill Tailings Remedial Action (UMTRA) Project recently incorporated additional railcars making it possible to increase the number of intermodal containers on each train shipment. This increase in railcars means the project can now transport more material per shipment thereby more efficiently driving down its environmental liability.

The train transports mill tailings and other contaminated materials from the Moab site to the Crescent Junction disposal cell four times a week. The project continually evaluates options to optimize shipments and increase the amount of material sent for disposal. Earlier this year, up to 144 containers were shipped on each train. Recently, the Remedial Action Contractor, North Wind Portage, teamed up with Union Pacific to reevaluate railcar positioning in the loading and unloading areas at both sites. The team determined that, with a few changes to processes, additional railcars could be added to each shipment creating the longest train in project history. With the added railcars, the project is capable of shipping an additional 24 containers each week, or approximately 815 additional tons of material.

"It's imperative that we recalibrate our thinking around innovation and creativity to continuously examine how we do business and strive to noticeably reduce the amount of tailings at Moab. By increasing the train's load, we can now move more mill tailings for nearly the same cost, making each shipment even more impactful," Federal Cleanup Director Russell McCallister said. "The team initiated a creative solution that aligns with a vision and strategy directed at intentional and consistent project delivery to safely move a million tons a year."

Mill tailings are a sand-like material that remain from processing uranium ore. The tailings are excavated and shipped to the Crescent Junction disposal cell about 30 miles north, where they are placed and capped with a multi-layered cover composed of native soils and rock.

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