and surface footprint, while still enjoying low operating costs and a very strong return on investment," said Ross McElroy, president, chief operating officer, and chief geologist for Fission. "We are delighted by the results and have demonstrated the flexibility of the Triple R to be mined by multiple methods. Fission is now able to transition confidently into the feasibility study phase."

■ GoviEx announced on September 23 that its mining permit for Madaouela I has been revised to include an additional 23.84 million lb of measured and indicated uranium resources identified by the company in July. GoviEx holds a mining permit granted by the Republic of Niger that will now include an additional 5.96 million lb U_3O_8 in the measured and indicated categories for the Miriam uranium deposit, as well as 17.88 million lb U_3O_8 in the measured and indicated categories for the Madaouela South North East deposit. The government of Niger has confirmed that the environmental and social impact assessment certificate for the Madaouela I mining permit covers both deposits.

GoviEx Chairman Govind Friedland said, "We warmly welcome this significant milestone as we advance the optimization work and the de-risking efforts of the targeted mineral resources contained within the Madaouela Project."

Fuel Briefs

LIGHTBRIDGE HAS DEMONSTRATED ITS ROD EXTRUSION PROCESS using nonnuclear surrogate materials, the company announced on September 23. The announcement that 6-foot rods—sized for NuScale Power's small modular reactor—had been extruded was followed on September 24 by an announcement of the successful extrusion of full-length, 12-foot rods. "This is the first time our process has been demonstrated for full-length commercial reactors and follows our recent announcement that we had successfully demonstrated the process to produce fuel rods at a length designed for small modular reactors," said Seth Grae, president and chief executive officer of Lightbridge and of Enfission, a joint venture between Lightbridge and Framatome.

Lightbridge's patented manufacturing process is known as coextrusion because the rods are extruded with a bonded cladding surrounding the core material. The surrogate materials used were designed to simulate the conditions expected in the manufacture of rods using a uranium-zirconium alloy.

Grae provided an update on September 27, stating, "These rods will now undergo finishing operations in the coming weeks, which includes final cleaning and surface-polishing steps. . . . Upon completion of the finishing operations, some of the rods will be made available for public display, while others will be destructively characterized in order to provide validation data for computational simulations of the extrusion process developed by Enfission."

THE NRC HAS ISSUED GUIDANCE ON NHPA REQUIREMENTS for uranium recovery licensing actions. Final Interim Staff Guidance (ISG) NMSS–ISG–02, "Guidance for Conducting the Section 106 Process of the National Historic Preservation Act for Uranium Recovery Licensing Actions," issued on September 13, is primarily intended to assist agency staff in conducting a consultation process, according to the NRC. The development of the ISG was undertaken to improve the Section 106 process for uranium recovery licensing actions after a number of licensing actions were submitted between 2007 and 2017 requiring NHPA reviews of increasing scope and complexity. The ISG was to take effect on October 21. NN