

October 30, 2002

MEMORANDUM TO: Melvyn N. Leach, Chief
Special Projects and Inspection Branch
Division of Fuel Cycle Safety
and Safeguards

THRU: Joseph G. Giitter, Chief */RA/*
Special Projects Section
Special Projects and Inspection Branch, FCSS

FROM: Timothy C. Johnson */RA/*
Senior Mechanical Systems Engineer
Special Projects Section
Special Projects and Inspection Branch, FCSS

SUBJECT: OCTOBER 21, 2002, MEETING SUMMARY: TROUSDALE COUNTY
COMMISSION MEETING

On October 21, 2002, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) staff participated in a Trousdale County Commission meeting held in Hartsville, Tennessee, to answer questions on the proposed Louisiana Energy Services (LES) gas centrifuge enrichment plant project planned for Hartsville, Trousdale County, Tennessee. I am attaching the meeting summary for your use. This summary contains no proprietary or classified information.

Docket: 70-3103

Attachment: Trousdale County Commission
Meeting Summary

cc: William Szymanski/DOE
Rod Krich/Exelon
James Curtiss/W&S
Mario Robles/USEC
Jerry Clift/Trousdale
Michael Marriotte/NIRS
Ed Nanney/Tenn
George Dials/LES

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NAME	TCJohnson:dw		KValloch		JGiitter		MLeach	
DATE	10/ 23 /02		10/ 24 /02		10/ 26 /02		10/ 30 /02	

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Trousdale County Commission Meeting Summary

Dates: October 21, 2002

Place: Trousdale County Courthouse
Hartsville, TN

Attendees: M. Leach/U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC)
T.C. Johnson/NRC
J. Clift, Trousdale County Executive
Trousdale County Commissioners
Approximately 80 members of the public

Purpose:

The purpose of this meeting was to answer questions from Trousdale County Commissioners and the public on the proposed Louisiana Energy Services (LES) gas centrifuge enrichment plant proposed to be located in Hartsville, Trousdale County, Tennessee.

Discussion:

After the meeting was called to order by the Trousdale County Executive, T.C. Johnson provided a brief summary of the NRC licensing process and the environmental review process. He indicated that NRC is an independent regulatory agency responsible for ensuring public and worker health and safety and is not a promoter of the proposed project. NRC will not issue a license unless LES can demonstrate it can meet NRC's safety requirements. T.C. Johnson also discussed opportunities for the public to provide input in the licensing and environmental review process. He also stated that the public comment period on the LES "white papers" is being extended to November 13, 2002, in response to comments at the October 14, 2002, public information forum and comments from LES.

The County Commissioners then asked questions. Questions dealt with waste management issues, transportation, the Homer, Louisiana, project hearing issues, effluent releases, radiation protection standards, decommissioning funding, and reimbursement of NRC costs through applicant and licensee fees. The public was then given the opportunity to ask questions. In addition to the above areas, the public also asked questions about Davis Besse issues, groundwater contamination at the Paducah gaseous diffusion plant, a worker compensation program applicable to gaseous diffusion plant workers, County zoning requirements, and property values.

Regarding the disposition of the depleted uranium tails. T.C. Johnson stated that, by law, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) is responsible for the disposal of depleted uranium from the LES enrichment facility and LES will need to negotiate an agreement with DOE for transfer of the material. T.C. Johnson also said that there are some commercial uses for depleted uranium, but the demand is less than the current supply. DOE currently has over 700,000 MT of depleted uranium in storage. The U.S. government has safely stored depleted uranium for over 50 years at the existing gaseous diffusion plants in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, Paducah, Kentucky, and Portsmouth, Ohio. However, NRC expects LES to propose a disposition plan with timely transfer of the depleted uranium tails to DOE and a program for safely storing the cylinders.

Questions involving transportation included the safety of uranium hexafluoride shipments. T.C. Johnson stated that several thousand uranium hexafluoride cylinders are transported annually in the United States. The transportation package designs are based on international standards in place for over 30 years. He said that while there have been a few mishaps in the United States, none have resulted in cylinder rupture.

In response to a question, T.C. Johnson summarized the hearing issues from the previous LES effort to license a gas centrifuge enrichment plant in Homer, Louisiana. He explained that several issues had been raised in the hearing, but the issue involving environmental justice had not been resolved at the time LES requested that the proceeding be terminated. He stated that the environmental justice issue was a unique case involving two poor, black communities that surrounded the proposed site.

Regarding effluent releases, T.C. Johnson stated that NRC regulations allow licensees to release liquid and gaseous effluents provided the releases meet specific release concentrations. The specific requirements are in 10 CFR Part 20, NRC's regulations for radiation protection. T.C. Johnson also explained the basis for NRC's 100 mrem/year public dose limit and compared this dose to doses from natural background. Even though there are wide variations in natural background levels across the country, the incidence of cancer is generally the same, indicating that cancer incidence does not appear to be related to variations in background-level doses.

A question was asked about whether LES could abandon the plant and leave a contaminated site. T.C. Johnson explained that NRC requires an applicant for an enrichment facility to provide a decommissioning cost estimate and a funding mechanism to pay for cleanup in the event the licensee is unable to decommission the site. The cost estimate is periodically updated to reflect changes in plant contamination levels and facility operations. The funding assurance mechanism is maintained outside the control of the company with NRC being the beneficiary. In evaluating the reasonableness of the proposed cost estimate, NRC would review the actual experience in decommissioning Urenco gas centrifuge operations and its own experience in reviewing decommissioning costs at other licensed facilities.

Several questions were asked about the requirements for NRC licensees to reimburse NRC for licensing expenses. T.C. Johnson stated that Congress requires NRC to recover approximately 95 percent of its budget from its licensees. M. Leach added that whether a facility receives a license or not, it must pay the review costs.

Concerns were raised about the thoroughness of NRC inspections given the experience at the Davis Besse plant where severe corrosion in the reactor vessel head went undetected. T.C. Johnson indicated that NRC is reviewing this issue and recently issued a lessons-learned report indicating areas where improvements are needed. Also, NRC inspectors are not limited in the areas they can inspect or the detail of their inspections.

Questions were asked about groundwater contamination at the Paducah gaseous diffusion plant site. T.C. Johnson stated that there is groundwater contamination at the Paducah site that is being addressed by DOE and the State of Kentucky. This contamination resulted from plant operations and not from storage of depleted uranium. Also, the contamination resulted from using recycled feedstock, which would not be allowed by LES.

One questioner asked about the compensation package recently enacted by Congress for the Paducah site. T.C. Johnson responded that the compensation package is intended for site

workers that may have been exposed to hazardous materials during operation of the gaseous diffusion plants while the plants were operated by the Federal government.

Several questions were asked about Trousdale County zoning requirements. One of the decisions needed for plant siting is a County decision on zoning the proposed site for industrial purposes. Questions were asked about NRC enforcement of zoning decisions. T.C. Johnson indicated zoning decisions are outside of NRC's legal jurisdiction and such decisions are the purview of the County. Consequently, the County would be responsible for enforcing its zoning ordinances.

Several questions were asked about the effect of the LES plant on property values. T.C. Johnson indicated that this area would be evaluated in the environmental impact statement and, if members of the public have specific information or concerns, these data can be provided at the environmental impact statement scoping meeting that will be scheduled shortly after LES submits its application.

Action Items:

None.