UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
REGION II
SAM NUNN ATLANTA FEDERAL CENTER
61 FORSYTH STREET SW SUITE 23T85
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30303-8931

June 23, 2000

Genaro Torres León, Director
Emergency Response & Superfund Program
Commonwealth of Puerto Rico
Office of the Governor
Environmental Quality Board
P. O. Box 11488
Santurce, PR 00910-1488

Dear Mr. Torres León:

In response to your request dated June 2, 2000, we would be pleased to meet with you to discuss the role of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). As you are aware, the NRC is responsible for ensuring the safe use of byproduct, source, and special nuclear material in Puerto Rico. We accomplish this by licensing and inspecting users of radioactive material. We frequently interface with the Radiological Health Division of the Puerto Rico Department of Health.

To provide you with some general information on our inspections of radioactive waste transportation and disposal, I have enclosed an excerpt from a typical inspection procedure. I have also included for your review, the NRC Information Digest. You may be particularly interested in the sections on Nuclear Material Safety and Radioactive Waste. We understand from a June 16, 2000, telephone call between Ms. Eira Medina of your staff and Mr. Mark S. Lesser of my staff, that you are also interested in discussing emergency response procedures.

We would be happy to provide any additional information that you may need. Please coordinate the desired meeting date with Mr. Lesser (404) 562-4731 .

Sincerely,

/RA/

Luis A. Reyes
Regional Administrator

Enclosures: As stated

cc w/o encl 1:
Commonwealth of Puerto Rico

Distribution w/encl 1: (See page 2)

Distribution w/encl 1:
M. Lesser, RII
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DATE	6/21/00	6/21/00	6/ /2000	6/22/00	6/23/00	6/ /2000	6/ /2000
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EXCERPT FROM TYPICAL NRC INSPECTION PROCEDURE

Waste Management

a. Waste Storage and Disposal:

Verify that the waste is stored and controlled in a secure and safe manner, and that radiation levels in unrestricted areas surrounding the storage area do not exceed the limits of 10 CFR 20.1301, "Dose limits for individual members of the public." Also, verify that any radiation areas or high-radiation areas surrounding the storage area have been identified and properly posted. Verify that disposals of decay-in-storage waste are performed in accordance with the regulations and license conditions. (Note that licensees, other than medical, must be specifically authorized in the license to dispose of waste by decay-in-storage.) Verify that the licensee is conducting appropriate surveys and defacing radioactive material labels before disposing of the waste.

Review the licensee's procedures and records to verify that each shipment of radioactive waste intended for offsite disposal is accompanied by a shipment manifest that includes all the required information.

Review the licensee's procedures and records to verify that each package of radioactive waste intended for shipment to a licensed land disposal facility is labeled, as appropriate, to identify it as Class A, B, or C waste (in accordance with the classification criteria of 10 CFR 61.55 [Subsection III.A.2 of Appendix F to 10 CFR 20.1001-20.2401]).

b. Effluent:

Review and verify that waste-handling equipment, monitoring equipment, and/or administrative controls are adequate to maintain radioactive effluents within the limits established by the license and other regulatory requirements and are ALARA. Verify that the licensee’s air effluents, excluding Radon-222 and its daughters, have not exceeded the constraint limit in 10 CFR 20.1101. If the licensee has exceeded the constraint, verify that the licensee has notified NRC, as required by 10 CFR 20.2203. If the licensee has notified NRC that its air effluents have exceeded the constraint limit, review the effectiveness and timeliness of the licensee’s corrective actions and root cause analysis, and evaluate the licensee’s compliance with 10 CFR 20.2203.

Verify that liquid waste disposal via the sanitary sewer, if applicable, is in accordance with 10 CFR 20.2003. Verify that septic tank disposal, if applicable, and waste disposal through incineration, are in compliance with the regulations and all applicable license restrictions.

Determine the quality of the relevant procedures and the degree to which ALARA techniques are incorporated into them. Determine the extent to which process and engineering controls are used to minimize effluents.

Determine whether effluent monitoring systems and the associated analytical equipment are adequate to detect and quantify effluents with sufficient sensitivity, and whether they are maintained, calibrated, and operated in accordance with manufacturers' recommendations and good health physics practices.

Determine if all significant release pathways are monitored, all un-monitored pathways have been characterized, and all surveillance procedures for effluents are being implemented.

Additional inspection requirements are specified in Inspection Procedure (IP) 87102, "Maintaining Effluents from Materials Facilities As Low As Is Reasonably Achievable (ALARA)."

c. Transfer:

Verify that wastes are transferred to an authorized recipient specifically licensed to receive radioactive waste.

d. Records:

Verify that records of waste storage, transfer, and disposal are maintained in accordance with the requirements of 10 CFR Part 20 and the license.

Transportation

Verify that the licensee's procedures and documentation are sufficient to ensure that licensed material is transported in accordance with Part 71 and DOT regulations for transportation of radioactive materials.