Mr. Paul L. Leventhal, President
Mr. Alan J. Kuperman, Senior Policy Analyst
Nuclear Control Institute
1000 Connecticut Ave., NW, Suite 204
Washington, D.C. 20036

Dear Messrs. Leventhal and Kuperman:

Thank you for your follow-up letter dated February 13, 2001, regarding the application (XSNM03171) for the export of highly enriched uranium (HEU) to Canada for production of medical isotopes in the National Research Universal reactor (NRU). Your letter reiterates and underscores the following two points: (1) that you do not oppose issuance of the license currently requested to continue vital medical isotope production using the NRU facilities; and (2) that the Commission should consider reducing the amount of HEU authorized in export license XSNM03060 for the MAPLE reactors in Canada by one year's allocation, or 22.6125 kilograms.

A paper summarizing the results of the NRC staff's review of the current export license request was recently provided to the Commission[1]. In support of NRC's consideration of this license amendment, NRC staff members visited Canada to meet with CNSC and AECL/Nordion representatives to obtain first hand information on (1) the progress of the LEU conversion program, including the new preliminary schedule for the conversion; and (2) the actual HEU requirements (quantity and schedule of shipments) that are required to sustain the production of medical radioisotopes. After considering all of the information, the Commission reached a final decision on the Transnuclear license amendment request on April 2 (enclosed), approving the immediate export of 5 kilograms of HEU necessary to sustain the production of medical radioisotopes. Export of the remaining 5 kilograms of HEU is conditioned upon the licensee providing the Commission with at least 60 days notice of the export and with information concerning the status of the NRU reactor and the need for the additional material. The Commission also directed the staff to obtain written assurances from the licensee that, consistent with its current schedule, it will not make any additional shipments under License Number XSNM03060 until the Commission receives the next annual report on the MAPLE reactor program, which is due to the Commission in May 2001.

[1]SECY-01-0047, "Proposed License to Export HEU to Canada For Use in The NRU Reactor to Produce Medical Radioisotopes," dated March 16, 2001

The Commission appreciates your comments, and looks forward to your future involvement.

Sincerely,

Richard A. Meserve

Enclosure: As stated