

46 FR 1379A
3/7/01
44

CHARLES REX CHILDERS
17125 Players Ridge Drive
Cornelius, NC 28031

FAX COVER SHEET

Date: *MAY 15, 2001*

Sent To: *TIM HARRIS*

Fax Number: *301-415-5398*

Number Of Pages: *3*
(Including Cover)

Sent By: *CHARLES REX CHILDERS*
Phone: 704-896-8266
Fax: 704-896-8266

Subject: _____

Template = ADM-013

*F-RIDS = ADM-03
Cell = T. HARRIS (TEH)*

CHARLES REX CHILDERS
BETTY J. CHILDERS
17125 Players Ridge Drive
Cornelius, NC 28031

FAX

To: Tim Harris
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Fax No. 301-415-5398

Dear Mr. Harris:

We want to express our strong opposition to the project of Duke Energy, to use weapons grade plutonium for fuel. We are not anti-nuclear activists. Before retiring in Cornelius, NC in 1991, for over twenty years, we lived within a ten mile radius of the Sequoyah Nuclear Plant in Soddy-Daisy, Tennessee. We came back to our home state and built a house in the Lake Norman area, not only for the scenic beauty and the small town atmosphere, but we were also under the impression that Duke Energy's nuclear reactors were safe and well built. If they were not safe, it didn't make sense that Crescent (Duke's subsidiary) would develop the Lake Norman area so heavily within a five mile radius of the McGuire Nuclear plant. We are discovering now that the safety of the McGuire and Catawba plants is questionable even for regular uranium fuel. (Quotes from the Charlotte Observer newspaper are as follows-10/19/00) "The two plants are among 10 nationwide that built smaller, cheaper structures to contain radiation that could escape during a reactor accident." A study for the NRC, published in April stated, "Such plants would be much more likely to fail than other containment types during some quickly developing accidents." Why would the Energy Department even consider letting Duke Energy experiment with weapons-grade plutonium in two sub-standard nuclear reactors located within a 50 mile radius of 2 million people?

The MOX fuel manager for Duke Energy, Steve Nesbit, was quoted in the Lake Norman Times (May 9, 2001) "Europeans have been using MOX fuel for years in nuclear power reactors similar to ours." In the same article, the writer Leah Hyder states that "Duke Power will be the first company in the world to use plutonium from weapons for fuel." Bruce Henderson writes in his column-(Charlotte Observer May 6, 2001) "Duke Power's McGuire and Catawba plants would become the first in the United States to use surplus bomb material. European reactors have used a different form of plutonium fuel for decades."

Why did Mr. Nesbit make that misleading statement? Why is he trying to convince the public that this project is not experimental? Could the reason be that in 1999 Duke Energy invested in a \$116 million contract with a consortium to design and operate a plant to produce MOX at the Savannah River site.(Charlotte Observer May 6, 2001) The U.S. Department of Energy approved this project before Duke's licenses have been issued. Would Duke Energy have entered a \$116 million contract unless they thought the licenses was a done deal?

If we have a problem with disposing of our own nuclear waste why are we importing Russia's plutonium? We will be importing the terrorist as well, since they will follow the weapons

Page 2

plutonium. The U.S. will be bringing in the bomb material, they will only have to bring themselves.

Why is Duke Energy the only power company of the original 15 who volunteered, the only one who hasn't backed out? (Lake Norman Times November 15,2001)

One could write extensively about trucks, carrying weapons-grade plutonium, (60 truck loads in 18 months) traveling on the highly congested Interstate 77. To reach McGuire the route will have to be from Interstate 77 to Highway 73. Highway 73 is only two lanes and is the only evacuation route for this area. Will they close Highway 73 when the trucks are on the road? How will emergency vehicles get through? There are many questions and I don't think anyone has the answers.

Yours truly,

Charles R. Childers
Betty J. Childers

Charles R. Childers

Betty J. Childers

P.S. We plan to send copies of this letter to our governmental representatives.