



OFFICE OF THE
SECRETARY

UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555

March 13, 1989

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MEMORANDUM FOR: Chairman Zech
Commissioner Roberts
Commissioner Carr
Commissioner Rogers
Commissioner Curtiss

FROM: Samuel J. Chilk, Secretary

SUBJECT: MR. BELLMAN'S RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS FROM
COMMISSIONER CURTISS

Attached is Mr. Bellman's response to the questions raised by Commissioner Curtiss regarding the final rule proposed in SECY-89-27 - Final Rulemaking on the Licensing Support System for the High Level Waste Licensing Proceeding.

We have been advised that the industry's response should be available today, March 13.

Attachment:
Bellman ltr of 3/10/89

Copy: OGC

RECEIVED
1989 MAR 13 AM 11:29



The Conservation Foundation

March 10, 1989

Samuel Chilk
Secretary
Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D.C. 20555

Re: Request for LSS Advisory Committee Responses to the
Questions from Commissioner Curtiss

Dear Secretary Chilk:

This is in reply to your recent correspondence with members of the Licensing Support System Advisory Committee for which I served as lead convenor and facilitator. Enclosed are the responses I have received from members of the Committee.

You have requested answers to certain questions framed by Commissioner Curtiss respecting particular terms upon which most of the Committee agreed, and you have emphasized Commissioner Curtiss' wish that such answers not be negotiated or the subject of lengthy discussion by the Committee. NRC staff prepared a strawman answer to each of the Commissioner's questions. Some of the Committee members' responses are based, in part, on the strawman.

Commissioner Curtiss in his memo to you, which you have sent along, asks for "the views of the Committee as a whole, where consensus exists, and of individual members where there is no consensus." In his questions, however, Commissioner Curtiss often asks for the underlying purpose and intent of a number of specific provisions of the agreement supported by most of the Committee, including NRC staff. I would take this opportunity to suggest that such an inquiry is in fundamental conflict with the purpose, and indeed the measure of success, of the Committee. The Commission created the Committee and, at least implicitly, charged it to negotiate. It must have been understood, as the Committee itself always recognized, that the negotiations process might yield specific agreements which individual Committee members would explain in varying terms, and that some agreements might be entered by Committee members in order to secure other agreements or overall agreement. This is a healthy dynamic and is common in most forms of negotiation, including negotiations among legislators and administrative rulemakers. Regulatory negotiations, after all, in large measure, mirror other more conventional negotiations processes.

Mr. Samuel Chilk, Secretary
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Thus, to survey the members of the Committee individually and discourage them from negotiated replies by isolating the issues and the members, risks the very agreements that the Committee was able to achieve at the Commission's behest. Perhaps, in the future, as is done in other legislative and rulemaking processes, it would be better practice to limit post negotiation inquiries to the specific terms of the agreement and any explanatory material already at hand, such as in this case the supplemental information and minutes of Committee meetings.

Sincerely,

Howard S. Bellman GLB

Howard S. Bellman
Senior Fellow

Enclosures

cc: Members of the LSS Advisory Committee

Murphy & Davenport
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

James H. Davenport *
Malachy R. Murphy

* Also Admitted in Nevada

Telecopier (206) 352-8468
Modem (206) 352-4719

Evergreen Plaza Building
711 Capitol Way, Suite 600
Olympia, Washington 98501
(206) 352-4000

March 2, 1989

COPY

Mr. Samuel J. Chilk, Secretary
Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D.C. 20555

Re: Request For LSS Advisory Committee Responses To
Questions From Commissioner Curtiss

Dear Secretary Chilk:

This is in response to your memo to Howard Bellman of February 24, 1989, a copy of which you provided to each member of the LSS Negotiating Committee, attaching a series of questions posed by Commissioner Curtiss regarding the LSS Rule. This response is provided on behalf of the State of Nevada.

As you point out in your memo, Commissioner Curtiss is seeking clarification from members of the Negotiating Committee on selected parts of the rulemaking package. Nevada declines to provide further amplification of our position, beyond what we have already said in our written and oral comments to the Commission, and in responses to questions from members of the Commission at the February 7, 1989 meeting.

In declining to respond specifically to Commissioner Curtiss's questions we wish to note the following. First, Nevada agreed to support the proposed rule because it represented a compromise among those parties who joined the consensus. Secondly, because the text of the rule itself, and its rationale, represented a consensus, the Supplementary Information explaining that text and rationale itself became a negotiated statement, representing a consensus among those members of the Committee who joined the overall consensus. To provide Nevada's specific response to Commissioner Curtiss's questions at this time, and thus an individual view as to the operative meaning of the rule, potentially threatens to break open the consensus arrived at, a circumstance which we would find highly undesirable, and which we therefore do not wish to risk. For these reasons Nevada stands on the language of the

rule itself, the Supplementary Information, and its written and oral comments and responses to the Commission.

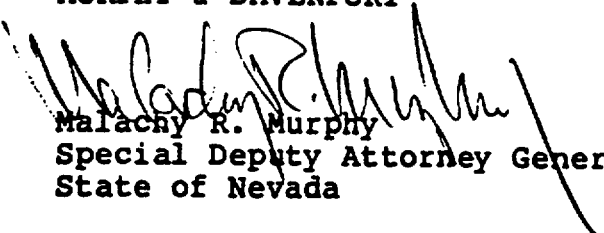
You have attached to your memo "strawman answers" prepared by the NRC staff to each of Commissioner Curtiss's questions. You note that the staff believes that these answers accurately characterize the results of the Committee deliberations during the rulemaking process, and indicate that if a participant disagrees with any of those answers, we should so indicate. We have reviewed those so called "strawman answers" and, while we do not wish to specifically approve of and thus associate ourselves with them, we can find nothing in them with which Nevada strongly disagrees.

While we wish that we could find ourselves able to be more precise in our response to your memo, we trust that you, and Commissioner Curtiss, will understand our reasons for not doing so.

With best personal regards.

Yours very truly,

MURPHY & DAVENPORT


Malachy R. Murphy
Special Deputy Attorney General
State of Nevada

MRM/kew

cc: Howard Bellman
Tim Mealey
Members, LSS Negotiating Comm.

ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENSE FUND

1405 Arapahoe Avenue
Boulder, CO 80302
(303) 440-4901

March 2, 1989

Samuel J. Chilk, Secretary
Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D.C. 20555

RE: Curtiss' Questions to the LSS Negotiating Committee

Dear Secretary Chilk,

On February 27, 1988, I received a packet of information requested responses to a series of questions on the LSS rule posed by Commissioner Curtiss. On Commissioner Curtiss' behalf, you have solicited an individual response from the Environmental Coalition of the Negotiating Committee. I was the spokesperson for this coalition. Our response to your questions is as follows.

The answers are contained in the language of the rule itself, and/or in the supplemental information which accompanies the rule. (It is my understanding that NRC staff has made available to Commissioner Curtiss a list of citations to the proposed final rule, the supplemental information and other Commission laws and regulations where answers to the questions posed may be found.) Precisely because Committee members were concerned that the underlying rationale for the rule and certain implementation issues might not be clear from the text of the rule itself, the Committee included the text of the supplemental information as part of the subject for negotiations.

The Environmental Coalition believes that any additional information we provide may unnecessarily jeopardize the consensus reached, which was a consensus based on the rule as a whole. Alternatively, the Commission could reconvene the Committee to negotiate a consensus response to Commissioner Curtiss' questions beyond the answers contained in the supplemental information, perhaps using as a starting point the strawman responses prepared by the NRC staff which the Environmental Coalition has reviewed and found to reflect, for the most part, the consensus as reported in the rule and supplemental information. Absent such further action, we cannot submit a more detailed response than this.

Sincerely,



Melinda Kassen
Senior Attorney



National Headquarters

257 Park Avenue South
New York, NY 10010
(212) 505-2100

1616 P Street, NW
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 387-3500

5655 College Avenue
Oakland, CA 94618
(415) 658-8008

1108 East Main Street
Richmond, VA 23219
(804) 780-1297

128 East Hargett Street
Raleigh, NC 27601
(919) 821-7793

NRC Secretary Samuel Chilk
March 2, 1989
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cc: Brooks Yeager
David Ortman
Howard Bellman
Mal Murphy
Dean Tousley
Jerry Saltzman
Steve Bradhurst
Steve Kraft
Chip Cameron
Bill Olmstead

HARMON, CURRAN & TOUSLEY

2001 S STREET, N.W.

SUITE 430

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20009-1125

GAIL MCGREEVY HARMON
DIANE CURRAN
DEAN R. TOUSLEY
ANDREA C. FERSTER
ANNE SPIELBERG*
SANDRA K. PFAU*

TELEPHONE
(202) 328-3500
FAX
(202) 328-6918

*Not Admitted in D.C.

March 8, 1989

Mr. Samuel J. Chilk, Secretary
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D.C. 20555

RE: Commissioner Curtiss's Questions on the LSS Rule

Dear Mr. Chilk:

I am in receipt of your February 24, 1989 Memorandum for Howard S. Bellman, with enclosed Memorandum to you and questions from Commissioner Curtiss for the LSS Negotiating Committee members. I represented the National Congress of American Indians on the Negotiating Committee, and am authorized to provide the following response on NCAI's behalf.

We appreciate Commissioner Curtiss' active interest in the LSS rule, particularly in light of his appointment to the Commission late in this rulemaking process. Regretfully, and with all due respect, we believe that the protocols and the spirit of the negotiated rulemaking process preclude us from providing specific responses to his questions.

Commissioner Curtiss has asked for "the views of the Committee as a whole, where consensus exists, and views of individual members where there is no consensus." Unfortunately, we are unable to characterize the views of the Committee as a whole beyond pointing to the result of the Committee's labors: all of the participants except the industry coalition agreed to the text of the rule and the supplementary information which is presently before the Commission. We cannot embellish that product without re-convening the Committee.

For the same reason, we must respectfully decline to propound our views as an individual Committee member. Among the protocols of the Negotiating Committee was an agreement by the parties not to comment on any consensus position which we had concurred with. If we were to provide our specific views on Commissioner Curtiss's questions, those views might conflict with those of another concurring party, thus threatening the consensus that was achieved. (We believe it is apparent from the

HARMON, CURRAN & TOUSLEY

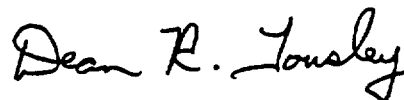
Mr. Samuel J. Chilk, Secretary
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testimony of the parties at the Commission's February 7, 1989 briefing that the near-consensus that was achieved is highly valued by all the concurring parties.)

We have examined the "strawman" answers that were prepared by the NRC Staff. While they appear as a whole to be reasonable explanations of the outcome of the negotiations, we cannot endorse them as such, as they have not been discussed by the Committee. We would not consider it appropriate for those strawman answers to become a *de facto* part of the rulemaking history without having them be the subject of negotiation by the Committee.

NCAI values highly its good working relationship with the NRC Staff and with the Commissioners. The Commission has evidenced much-appreciated receptivity to the concerns and interests of Indian tribes in recent years, particularly in the context of the nuclear waste program. We underscore that favorable experience in order to emphasize that we do not lightly or cavalierly decline to provide the specific responses which Commissioner Curtiss requests. We sincerely hope to have and to maintain a productive relationship with Commissioner Curtiss as with the Commission as a whole. We trust that he will understand that our difficulty with his questions is process-related, and in no way reflects any disrespect or disregard for either Commissioner Curtiss or the substance of his concerns.

Sincerely yours,



Dean R. Tousley
ATTORNEY FOR NCAI

cc: Timothy Mealey, Conservation Foundation