

EDO Principal Correspondence Control

FROM: DUE: 11/19/01 EDO CONTROL: G20010502
DOC DT: 11/05/01
FINAL REPLY:

Jim Warren
NC WARN (Waste Awareness
and Reduction Network)

TO:

Chairman Meserve

FOR SIGNATURE OF : ** PRI ** CRC NO: 01-0588

Chairman

DESC: ROUTING:

Halt of Nuclear Waste Shipments

Travers
Paperiello
Kane
Norry
Craig
Burns/Cyr
Mallett, RII
Collins, NRR
Wessman, IRO
ERCT
Schum, OEDO
Davis, NMSS

DATE: 11/07/01

ASSIGNED TO: CONTACT:
NMSS Virgilio

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS OR REMARKS:

Coordinate response with ERCT.

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
CORRESPONDENCE CONTROL TICKET

Date Printed: Nov 07, 2001 07:58

PAPER NUMBER: LTR-01-0588 **LOGGING DATE:** 11/06/2001
ACTION OFFICE: EDO

AUTHOR: Jim Warren (NC WARN)
AFFILIATION: NC
ADDRESSEE: CHRM Richard Meserve
SUBJECT: Concerns halt of nuclear waste shipments - as has DOE

ACTION: Signature of Chairman
DISTRIBUTION: RF

LETTER DATE: 11/05/2001
ACKNOWLEDGED: No
SPECIAL HANDLING: SECY to Ack
NOTES: Commission Correspondence
FILE LOCATION: Adams

DATE DUE: 11/21/2001 **DATE SIGNED:**

EDO --G20010502

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Waste Awareness and Reduction Network**NC WARN**

November 5, 2001

Dr. Richard Meserve, Chairman
United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission

Via Fax: 301-415-1672

Subject: NRC must halt nuclear waste shipments – as has DOE

Dear Chairman Meserve:

In mid-October, the U.S. Department of Energy suspended a planned shipment of irradiated fuel assemblies from the defense industry for at least six months due to concerns about possible terrorist attacks on slow-moving waste trains. It seems that the NRC would already have halted similar shipments of such waste fuel by the only U.S. utility transporting the deadly material – Carolina Power & Light/Progress Energy. As head of an organization representing thousands of North Carolina residents, I call on you to act now – without delay – and order CP&L to cease all waste shipments to the Shearon Harris Nuclear Plant.

DOE and NRC have both been long criticized for succumbing to nuclear industry influence, which could explain why DOE officials twice ordered the shipment from New York to resume after its initial cancellation on September 11th. The fact that it was halted a third and final time reflects that there must have been a rigorous internal debate about safety – resulting in the decision that it is too dangerous to create a potential target for terrorists that, if attacked, could release a large amount of radioactivity into the atmosphere and/or a waterway.

It would be inconsistent, and in this case highly dangerous, for one federal agency to contradict another's findings regarding public safety involving trains carrying high-level nuclear waste.

This year, the NRC placed an enormous burden on the people of central North Carolina by approving the Harris waste pool expansion after refusing to even consider the warnings of top experts that a terrorist act could initiate a catastrophic nuclear waste pool fire. It is now clear that the NRC was wrong. The so-called "remote risk" is hardly that after the September 11 WTC disaster. Without your action, central North Carolina will be home to the nation's fastest growing nuclear stockpile – with four reactors feeding one waste site – and a potential target that grows larger each time CP&L refuels any of its reactors.

Nuclear waste trains make slow-moving targets, and represent an entirely unnecessary risk to the public. The counties through which these train shipments pass have no emergency planning for such an accident, nor are there any evacuation procedures in place.

Should the NRC allow CP&L to continue this practice, you will have by default left in place a threat to numerous communities across the Carolinas that if capitalized on by terrorists, could cost many lives along with lost homes and property. The public now lives with the anxiety of wondering when the nuclear waste trains pass near their homes (since the shipments are kept secret even from emergency personnel), and whether some night they might be awakened by the dreaded sirens signaling that they and their families are in extreme danger.

On October 10th, public officials from three counties called on CP&L to cease transporting the waste. The company has not yet acted, so the NRC must make that call. The threat of terrorism will likely never fully abate; therefore your order should be permanent. At the very least, shipments should be stopped pending open hearings, with public and local government involvement, in order to fully evaluate the risks of transport versus alternative means of managing the nuclear waste, plus a comprehensive environmental impact statement. I am sure you will agree that the public deserves that much.

In the current "War on Terrorism", CP&L's shipments and crowded waste pools put the citizens of central N.C. on the front lines with no defense to speak of, scanty information, and no evacuation plan for most of a very large potential accident zone. Should you choose not to stop the shipments, I must insist that you present a full explanation to us, and to Sen. Jessc Helms, Sen. John Edwards, Rep. David Price, and Attorney General Ashcroft, as copied below. I look forward to your prompt reply.

Sincerely,



Jim Warren
Executive Director

cc Sen. Jessc Helms
Sen. John Edwards
Rep. David Price
Attorney General John Ashcroft
Orange County Board of Commissioners