GANE
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August 28, 2002

Mike Lesar
Chief, Rules and Directives Branch
Division of Administrative Services
Office of Administration, Mail Stop T-6D59
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, DC 20555

Attn: Tim Harris

Dear Messrs. Lesar and Harris,

Last night at a public NRC meeting in North Augusta we were alerted to the fact that the comment period for the MOX Environmental Impact Statement expires August 30.

We would like for you to grant an extension of time for public comment, and also for you to designate the EIS meetings scheduled in North Augusta, South Carolina (September 17); Savannah, Georgia (September 18); and Charlotte, North Carolina (September 19) as official scoping hearings and record them as such.

This is the first plutonium processing program undertaken in this country in more than a generation, and the increase in general confusion surrounding the program resulting from the January decision to cancel immobilization and include an additional 6.4 tons of impure plutonium in the MOX program suggest the utmost care and deliberation in creating the environmental impact statement about this unprecedented undertaking to turn weapons-grade plutonium into a novel nuclear fuel.

Once alerted to the fact that a Federal Register Notice had been made about the opportunity for public comment, it was still an effort to find it, titled "Notice of Delay in Issuance of the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements for the Mixed Oxide Fuel Fabrication Facility." Since the community that is focused on MOX was well aware of the delays to the MOX program, this title did not announce itself as containing urgent information. Additionally, since the applicant's supplemental Environmental Report was not filed until July and the supplemental Construction Authorization Request is not expected before the end of October, beginning public comment on the draft MOX EIS in April, well in advance of those key documents, is neither logical nor obvious.

Finally, the DCS ER is not readily available to the public — it has not yet been posted to the NRC's website. Without the ER and the CAR there is an unreasonable void in the basis for public comment.

GANE believes that these are compelling reasons to extend the public comment period for the MOX EIS, and suggests the comment period be extended to 45 days from the time that the NRC is able to post the ER on its website.

We appreciate your most rapid consideration and favorable response to our request.

Sincerely,

Glenn Carroll

Glenn Carroll
Coordinator

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