

November 1, 2002

Mr. William F. Troxler, Jr.  
Chairman and President  
Troxler Electronic Laboratories, Inc.  
3008 Cornwallis Road  
P.O. Box 12057  
Research Triangle Park, NC 27709

Dear Mr. Troxler:

I am responding on behalf of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) to your letter of September 6, 2002. In your letter you discussed the issue of security measures for stolen radioactive sources in gauges and noted your company's efforts to educate gauge users in how to prevent their theft.

At the outset, let me say that the Commission appreciates your proactive efforts in communicating and providing information to your users. In addition, we agree with your view that the malevolent use of gauges with small quantities of radioactive material does not represent a significant health risk. However, the use of stolen gauges in a radiological dispersal device could disrupt normal activities in an area and seriously impact the local economy, in part because of fears of radioactive materials, and in part because of the probable necessity of some evacuations and expensive decontamination efforts. It is for this reason that the NRC is currently evaluating its safeguards and security programs that govern the use of radioactive materials, including the system of controls for industrial users of nuclear material.

Let me assure you that as part of our evaluation, we are considering the potential risk of radioactive sources by carefully evaluating such factors as the amount of material, the form of the material, the number of devices, their availability, and controls that may already be in place. Any measures that the NRC will take to control radioactive sources will be proportionate to the risks they pose to health and safety and the environment. As the staff continues with its evaluation, it will be soliciting comments and feedback, and we look forward to your participation.

If you have any further comments or questions, please contact me.

Sincerely,

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Richard A. Meserve