

10/2/02
67FR 61932

MICHAEL LESAR
Chief, Rules Review and Directives Branch
Division of Administration Services
Office of Administration
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, DC 20555

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Dear Chief Lesar:

It is unacceptable that the NRC is considering an effort by Louisiana Energy Services, an intending license applicant, to manipulate the licensing procedure in its favor. The content of the white papers reveals that LES is seeking prejudice on issue areas that have caused it trouble in the past, or on issues which are potentially problematic. The submission of these memoranda is an overt attempt on the part of LES to evade thorough public and government investigation in areas where the company knows itself to be vulnerable.

The specific issues raised by LES in the white papers are themselves problematic. To restrict or exempt full consideration of such weighty matters as the comparative environmental impact of a "no action" alternative, environmental justice, the consortium's financial qualifications, anti-trust concerns, foreign control and ownership issues, and the disposition of tailings, would reduce NRC's licensing procedure to a flimsy rubber-stamp and further erode public confidence in the agency as an effective regulator.

A dangerous precedent would be set if the NRC allows LES to manipulate the licensing procedure in this way. It is highly improper for the NRC to allow a potential license applicant to define the parameters of licensing considerations, in effect, calling for prejudice in their favor. This violates NRC's own licensing regulations, undermines even the pretense of objectivity in the agency's licensing activities, and calls into question the ability of the NRC Commissioners to be a dispassionate appeals body for Atomic Safety and Licensing Board actions.

Finally, please extend the comment period on these white papers at least 90 days. The allotted period is insufficient, if meaningful public participation is the goal, especially given the breadth of issues dealt with in the white papers, difficulties in accessing these documents, and the level of controversy surrounding the LES proposal.

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Thank you for your time and attention to this letter.

Regards,

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