

March 7, 2003

Dr. Raymond G. Wymer
Vice-Chairman, Advisory Committee on Nuclear Waste
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
11545 Rockville Pike
Rockville, MD 20852

SUBJECT: ON THE OCCASION OF YOUR RETIREMENT FROM THE ADVISORY
COMMITTEE ON NUCLEAR WASTE

Dear Dr. Wymer:

On behalf of the Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards (NMSS) of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), I commend you for your six years of service on the Advisory Committee on Nuclear Waste (ACNW). The knowledge, history, and insights you accrued over the last 50 years, particularly in the area of radiochemistry and materials technology, have greatly assisted NMSS in its work. Your retirement during your second term is a loss to the Agency not easily regained.

Your expertise in radionuclide chemistry focused NMSS on a variety of issues concerning decommissioning and high-level waste disposal regulations and guidance development. Your passion for safety was reflected in the interest you took in the entire spectrum of decommissioning activities, including attending decommissioning meetings above and beyond the regular ACNW meeting schedule. You also helped to guide our actions concerning the disposition of sealed sources, the control of source materials, and the entombment of waste.

We appreciate your efforts on ACNW working groups that focused on high-level waste chemistry initiatives. You spear-headed discussions on the engineered barriers and near-field environments (1998), a white paper on chemistry issues in the near-field (2000), and a record of corrosion issues brought forth by the State of Nevada, the U.S. Department of Energy, the Center for Nuclear Waste Regulatory Analyses and NRC staff (2001). Also, the 'vertical slice' through our Yucca Mountain geochemistry program that you directed for the Committee was particularly important to our Office (2001). Your insights and comments fostered improvements in clarity and integration of chemistry and related issues. Your long-term commitment to understand and convey to the staff the influence of chemical conditions on system behavior is a characteristic that we will try to perpetuate.

Also, your style of interaction was always polite, in good spirit, constructive, and often accompanied by realistic examples served with Tennessee-honed humor. We appreciate your professionalism in dealing with our staff, and taking the time to get to know them. You never had a disparaging word for anyone.

R. G. Wymer

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We are gratified to hear that you will continue to serve on nationally prominent committees concerned with radiological safety. Thus, we will all continue to benefit from your expertise and advice, but we will miss working directly with you on the ACNW. On behalf of NMSS, I wish you well in your future pursuits.

Sincerely,
/RA/

Martin J. Virgilio, Director
Office of Nuclear Material Safety
and Safeguards

R. G. Wymer

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Martin J. Virgilio, Director
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