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Rules and Directives Branch

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March 26, 2003

Rules and Review and Directives Branch
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Mail Stop T6-D59
Washington, DC 20555-0001

Dear Sirs,

The Augusta Metro Chamber of Commerce, with member businesses from across our two-state community supports the MOX project. The Chamber has followed the progress of the project since the beginning and with the release of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's draft environmental impact statement stating minimal environmental impacts; we believe NRC should issue a license for construction and eventually for operation of the MOX facility. Aside from being the right thing to do for the safety of our planet, support of this international effort will have the side effect of great economic benefit for our community.

We believe any concerns of safety have been answered. The safety of the process and the facility itself has been evaluated for years by many different groups. Every conclusion is the same—the MOX facility can be constructed and operated safely with minimal impacts. The technology has been safely used in Europe for over 35 years.

With the question of safety satisfied, we hope our citizens can now recognize the economic boost the MOX project will have in the regional economy. When focusing on some numbers listed in the Draft EIS for the construction and operation of the MOX facility and its associated facilities, the Pit Disassembly and Storage Facility and the Waste Solidification Building it is easy to see the positive impact on the community.

- In the peak year of construction, 1,820 workers will be required for the proposed action.
- On average, 1000 jobs will be created for the proposed facilities.
- During operations, 1,260 employees will be required each year.
- Income for workers during construction will be \$350 million.
- Income during operations will be \$610 million.
- The proposed facilities will produce approximately \$110 million in tax revenues from state income and sales tax.
- The proposed facilities will produce \$1,850 million for the gross regional product.

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The Central Savannah River Area will be proud to be home for the mission to reduce weapons plutonium. This project is one of great importance to the security of the world. That reason alone should be enough to see this MOX succeed. But it also positively impacts the CSRA in more ways than expected. It just shows that by doing the right thing and supporting our country, our citizens will receive benefits they never expected.

The Augusta Metro Chamber supports the licensure of the MOX facility and looks forward to both the global safety and local prosperity that it will create. Working together the Central Savannah River Area and the Department of Energy are making the world a better place.

Yours truly,



Edwin S. Presnell
President