

Leah R. Karpen

Leah R. Karpen
400 Charlotte St #803
Asheville NC
28801

Phone: 828-254-5489
FAX: 828-225-9059
email:

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Friday, March 14, 2003

Mr. Michael T. 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

Att: - Tim Harmis
2/28/03
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(26)
Rules and Directives Branch
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Dear Mr. Lesar:

Proposed MOX Nuclear Facility

As I am not able to attend the public hearing in Charlotte, NC, on March 27, I take this means to advise you of my opinion.

I understand that Duke Cogema Stone & Webster, a contractor of the Department of Energy, is proposing to build a Mixed Oxide (MOX) Fuel facility at the Savannah River site near Aiken, South Carolina. Surplus weapons-grade plutonium would be converted into fuel for use in commercial nuclear power reactors.

First of all, trucking the plutonium from nuclear weapons depots and trucking the MOX fuel to commercial reactors in the Southeast is an open invitation to terrorists and risks the danger of accidents which may not be foreseeable.

Use of MOX in nuclear reactors is not safe and could result in serious accidents. While some plutonium is split by fusion, new plutonium is being made in the reactor as a waste product. Thus, use of MOX fuel fails as a means of getting rid of plutonium.

MOX fuel could attack commercial nuclear reactors where they are weakest, as many reactors are aging prematurely and developing cracks. A nuclear accident involving MOX fuel could cause a serious meltdown.

Alternatives to this project must be considered: specifically, immobilization of surplus plutonium, or making off-specification MOX fuel unsuitable for reactors, which would have to go into spent fuel storage facilities.

I ask that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission not approve this project or the draft Environmental Impact Statement.

Sincerely yours,

Leah R. Karpen
(Mrs.) Leah R. Karpen

Sent by FAX

E-RTDS = ADM-03
Call = A. Lester (ACTS)

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