

June 12, 2003

Mr. James E. Hopf  
512 Acorn Court  
Scotts Valley, CA 95066

Dear Mr. Hopf:

This is in response to your letter to Richard A. Meserve, former Chairman of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), dated March 3, 2003, concerning the levels of radiation that should be considered acceptable in an event involving a radiological dispersal device (RDD), both for exposure and cleanup. The letter was referred to me for response.

Your letter highlighted some important issues that the NRC is currently reviewing. The Federal government, including NRC, Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Department of Energy, and Environmental Protection Agency, has been re-examining site restoration and recovery criteria to be used in case of an RDD. The NRC has noted that application of stringent recovery standards would aid terrorists in their goal of causing economic disruption. We also recognize the potential benefit of developing RDD-specific recovery criteria which pertains to the long-term protective cleanup actions that allow for the safe, unrestricted use of the contaminated area. However, delay in developing these criteria after an RDD event may result in unacceptable impacts. As a result, DHS has taken the lead in this area and is working with NRC and other agencies to develop an effective recovery plan in the event of an RDD that will minimize impacts to public health and safety, yet be reasonable from a re-entry and recovery standpoint.

We agree with you that public education on the impacts of an RDD event is essential. To that end, the NRC has posted a fact sheet on RDDs on its website (<http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/fact-sheets/dirty-bombs.html>) [Enclosed]. The Department of Homeland Security website also has information on radiation threats (<http://www.ready.gov/radiation.html>).

Thank you for your interest and comments in this matter.

Sincerely,

*/RA/*

Roy P. Zimmerman, Director  
Office of Nuclear Security and Incident Response

Enclosure: As stated

cc with enclosure: See next page

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Roy P. Zimmerman, Director  
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\*See earlier concurrence

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