

From: Glenn Carroll <atom.girl@mindspring.com>
To: Tim Harris <teh@nrc.gov>
Date: 5/14/03 4:10PM
Subject: GANE Comments on Draft MOX EIS

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Hi Tim,

I'm faxing you GANE's comments on the MOX EIS and embedding the text below.

Glenn

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May 14, 2003

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

Dear Mr. Lesar,

GANE's comments on the Nuclear Regulatory Commission Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for MOX follow:

1. The most profound flaw of the NRC's DEIS process is that it splits the MOX application into two parts - construction and operation - but the operations data is not subject to review. Environmental aspects of both must be considered. Most alarmingly, the NRC plans to sign off on its environmental review before operational plans are developed to safeguard 34 tons of plutonium during MOX processing. To separate construction and operation, and to not review critical design aspects of the basic program premise to contain the highly dangerous plutonium, is irresponsible and blatantly wrong.
2. The DEIS fails to address the reasonable alternative to MOX - plutonium immobilization. Immobilization would effectively achieve the MOX program's stated goal to safeguard weapons-grade plutonium. Continued storage, which the NRC analyzed instead of immobilization, is, conversely, an acknowledged security risk. The immobilization alternative compares favorably with MOX in other ways: large number of jobs provided; effective management for existing waste stocks at SRS; negligible waste stream as compared to MOX; cheaper than MOX. The public demands to see the in-depth comparison between MOX and

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immobilization which is required to satisfy the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

3. The DEIS fails to analyze weaknesses in Catawba and McGuire's ice condenser-type reactors, currently proposed to use the MOX fuel. The ice condenser design has a thin containment which is more likely to rupture in the case of a severe accident. Additionally, severe accidents are more likely with MOX fuel use. The DEIS must address these reactor-related MOX risks in its analysis.

4. The DEIS fails to acknowledge the possibility of insufficient reactors in the MOX program to keep pace with the proposed MOX production rate. Two or three additional reactors would be required to process the proposed volume of MOX fuel. The DEIS must state the environmental risks from failure to process plutonium to MOX, or conversely, excessive inventory of fresh MOX fuel containing weapons-grade plutonium, an extra security risk.

5. The DEIS analysis of the large volume of liquid radioactive wastes to be generated in the MOX program is incomplete. The NRC's estimates are baseless and therefore not verifiable. The public must be shown how the NRC arrives at its waste estimates.

6. The DEIS assumes a 10-year MOX program but DCS plans to apply for a 20-year license. The DEIS must analyze MOX production over 20-year duration.

7. Sabotage and terrorism have become increasingly common in recent years. The DEIS must analyze environmental risks from sabotage, malevolent acts, or terrorist attacks to: the MOX facility; reactors using MOX; transports of fresh fuel to reactors; or transports of plutonium to SRS. MOX, by involving weapons-grade plutonium, is an intrinsic security risk, and must be considered to have a strong attraction to terrorists. Absence of analysis of this environmental risk hampers efforts of public health authorities to respond to emergencies posed by potential security breaches.

Respectfully submitted,

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