

June 7, 2003

Governor James E. McGreevey
State of New Jersey
P.O. Box 001
Trenton, NJ 08625-001

Dear Governor McGreevey:

In your May 13, 2003, letter to former Chairman Richard A. Meserve, you stated that New Jersey will enforce strict standards for the dumping of hazardous material in the ocean and that New Jersey cannot afford to ignore the public health hazards and economic burden to its coast caused by materials, known as Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs), which threaten health, wildlife and environment.

I would like to thank you for your letter and I applaud you for taking such steps to protect the beaches of New Jersey. I understand that the shore areas are an integral part of the state's economy and way of life. I assure you that Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) licensees are regulated and inspected to ensure public health and safety, and the environment.

The NRC is an independent regulatory agency and its mission is to protect the public health and safety, and the environment, from the effects of radiation from nuclear reactors, materials, and waste facilities. We also regulate these nuclear materials and facilities to promote the common defense and security. NRC regulations require low-level radioactive waste to be disposed of only at commercially operated low-level waste disposal facilities. These facilities must be licensed by either the NRC or Agreement States and must be designed, constructed, and operated to meet strict safety standards. In addition, the operator of the facility must extensively characterize the site on which the facility is located and analyze how the facility will perform for thousands of years into the future. The requirements can be found in the Code of Federal Regulation (10 CFR 61). The NRC does not allow its licensees to dump radioactive waste in the ocean. Therefore, we are confident that the NRC regulations are protective of public health and safety, and the environment.

Because the regulation of hazardous waste material, and specifically PCBs, is under the jurisdiction of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), I am forwarding your letter to the EPA Administrator.

Sincerely

/RA M. Federline for/

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

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