



**South Carolina Society
of Professional Engineers**

A state society of the National Society of Professional Engineers

August 8, 2003

Robert E. Martin, Senior Project Manager, Section 1
Project Directorate II
Division of Licensing Project Management
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation
Nuclear Regulatory Commission
One White Flint North
11555 Rockville Pike
Rockville, MD 20555-0001

Dear Mr. Martin:

The South Carolina Society of Professional Engineers (SCSPE) supports Duke Energy's license amendment application to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to use mixed oxide fuel lead assemblies in its Catawba or McGuire nuclear stations.

We believe the use of mixed oxide (MOX) fuel in commercial nuclear reactors is an appropriate way to accomplish the timely disposition of surplus weapon-grade plutonium in the United States. Irradiation of MOX fuel will destroy much of the weapons-grade plutonium and isotopically degrade the remainder so that it is less attractive for use in nuclear weapons.

The use of MOX fuel is proven technology – with decades of European experience on which to draw. MOX fuel lead assembly programs have previously been carried out safely in the United States. Both McGuire and Catawba nuclear stations have proven track records of excellent performance and reliability.

The plutonium disposition program has special significance for those of us in the State of South Carolina. Facilities that will convert plutonium into MOX fuel will be located at the Department of Energy's Savannah River Site, and the Catawba nuclear station, which will use MOX fuel, is located in South Carolina. It is important for our state and our country that the plutonium disposition program is done promptly, successfully, and safely. Therefore, we encourage the NRC to perform thorough safety, security and environmental reviews in a timely manner.

Sincerely,

Joe S. Jones
Executive Director