

RICKANO CORPORATION

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WM-11

October 27, 1979

POOR ORIGINAL

Dr. Joseph Hendrie
Chairman, Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D.C. 22055

Dear Dr. Hendrie:

In view of the impending nuclear medicine crisis resulting from the announced closing of the low level nuclear waste sites in Beatty, Nevada and Hanford, Washington, I thought it might be helpful to you to be aware of our efforts to establish a low-level radioactive waste disposal site here in Lyons, Kansas.

Our initial application for a disposal license was submitted to the Kansas Department of Health and Environment in April 1978, requesting licensing of a low-level radioactive waste facility in an abandoned salt mine in Lyons, Kansas. My associate, James L. Harvey, and I are enthusiastic about this project as we feel salt mine disposal constitutes a significant environmental improvement over the current land fill process.

There are a number of reasons why we selected the Lyons salt mine for a proposed low-level radioactive waste disposal site.

1. The room and pillar design of the salt mine has excellent qualities. Radioactive material will be stored in a completely controlled environment 1034 feet below the ground surface, in a dry, even-temperature atmosphere...free from adverse climatic conditions and possible surface water migration that constitute potential concerns at landfill sites.
2. As I am sure you are aware, this salt mine in Lyons, Kansas was the site of the AEC's Operation Salt Vault that included several years of research by the AEC, providing a wealth of data on this specific mine and its geological qualities.
3. It is located only about 10 miles from the geographic center of the continental United States of America.
4. Salt mine storage allows for visual surveillance of the stored material to assure container integrity.
5. This mine offers about 50 million cubic feet of storage space.

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6. The final appeal is the community of Lyons, itself. Although there has been some concerns expressed neighboring communities due to misunderstanding of the project (which is to be expected), the people of Lyons have been most receptive and helpful in our efforts. The leadership of the community has an extraordinary layman's understanding and comprehension of the nuclear industry as a result of their lengthy association with the various Operation Salt Vault scientists and technicians.

With this background information, I would like to inform you of our progress since our initial license application in April of 1978. The 1979 Kansas Legislature passed legislation, Senate Bill 170, which was signed into law by Governor John Carlin. This bill among things established a perpetual care fund for our proposed operation.

During the summer of 1979, the Kansas Department of Health and Environment engaged in dialog with your agency seeking guidance and procedural recommendations.

Following this the Kansas Department of Health and Environment directed a number of questions to us, asking us to expand on our application's procedures and policies. We are completing the final draft of our response to them this week.

It is our understanding that the next step is an environmental impact assessment that is projected to require an additional twelve months to complete.

In view of the recent (and, perhaps, continuing) medical crisis expressed by Dr. Leonard Freeman, president of the Society of Nuclear Medicine, we felt that this information of our planned operations might be of value to you. Also in light of this crisis, we can assure you that we will do whatever we can to cooperate with your agency, the state of Kansas and the medical community in expediting this project and getting the facility into service.

I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you and any members of your staff at your earliest convenience and discuss our salt mine storage application in detail.

Sincerely,


Fredrick P. Beierle, President
RICKANO Corporation

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