

From: "Ken Alkema" <kalkema@envirocareutah.com>
To: <PFG@nrc.gov>
Date: 3/13/03 4:19PM
Subject: FW: AIF Survey

Paul, I am sorry that this took so long to get back to you. I needed to get input from others. I have inserted our comments after each question. Please let me know if you need additional information. thanks Ken

-----Original Message-----

From: Ken Alkema [mailto:kalkema@envirocareutah.com]
Sent: Thursday, March 13, 2003 1:04 PM
To: 'Ken Alkema'
Subject: FW: AIF Survey

-----Original Message-----

From: Paul Goldberg [mailto:PFG@nrc.gov]
Sent: Friday, February 21, 2003 1:11 PM
To: kalkema@envirocareutah.com
Subject: AIF Survey

Ken,

Thanks for your willingness to give us your views on AIF's. If you can return this to me by Feb. 28, I would appreciate it. Please feel free to contact me by e-mail (pfg@nrc.gov) or at 301-415-7842.

CC: "Karen Kirkwood" <kkirkwood@envirocareutah.com>

Survey of Industry Interest in Development of an Assured Isolation Facility

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission directed the NRC staff to proceed with a rulemaking plan that explores interest in the assured isolation concept for the storage of low-level radioactive waste (LLW) and provides a foundation for a Commission decision on whether to develop a rule. The rulemaking plan should include Agreement State interaction and participation (SRM-SECY-02-0127, 9/5/02, ML022480322). This decision was made in conjunction with the Commission's approval of the staff's proposed response to a letter from the State of Ohio requesting NRC's views on a proposed Ohio regulation for licensing an assured isolation facility. (See 9/12/02 letter to Robert Owen, ML022560082.) Accordingly, the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff and the Conference of Radiation Control Program Directors, Suggested State Regulations Committee on Part L, chaired by Robert Owen, State of Ohio, are jointly developing basic information on the projected need for disposal or storage of LLW and projected disposal capacity.

As an important aspect of this basic information, we are interested in knowing the extent of need for and interest in an assured isolation facility that would provide long-term, centralized storage of low-level radioactive waste, including material regulated under the Atomic Energy Act, naturally-occurring material, accelerator-produced material and technologically-enhanced naturally-occurring material (discrete sources only for this last). The facility would be open to multiple generators. We exclude mixed radioactive and chemical waste from this inquiry. We realize that any projections for the period of ten years are very uncertain, so we would appreciate rough estimates or ranges, with any qualifications you think appropriate. For purposes of this survey, we do not define an assured isolation facility other than to describe it as an engineered facility that would provide long-term, centralized storage of LLW to multiple generators. The facility could be designated as: 1. Exclusively for storage, with no option for disposal at the AIF; 2. For storage, with the expectation of disposal of the waste at the AIF; or 3. For storage, with the option of disposing of waste at the AIF.

Company: Envirocare of Utah

1. Would you be interested in developing or participating in development of an assured isolation facility (AIF), an engineered, centralized facility for long-term storage of low-level radioactive waste open to multiple generators of waste? Some proposals have included an option to convert the storage facility to disposal after an extended period of active storage operation. Please describe the extent of and reasons for your interest.

Envirocare would be interested in the development of an assured isolation facility (AIF). Envirocare has actually received a license for the disposal of Class A, B, and C waste in Utah, contingent upon the approval of the Legislature and the Governor. Envirocare has put this approval on hold and at this time is not seeking Governor and Legislative approval.

Assured isolation might be a way of managing the public's concerns with disposal. The inability of any compact from siting a disposal facility is obviously connected to the public's concern with land disposal. Assured isolation is attractive as an option to disposal because it might eliminate some of the concerns raised by the public over land disposal. With assured isolation, the waste will be kept in monitored and retrievable storage where it will be watched continuously to make sure that there is no danger to public health and the environment.

Envirocare has a very high level of interest in assured isolation. We have been the only low-level waste disposal facility sited in more than 20 years. Envirocare is committed to finding environmentally sound solutions for our customers. Assured isolation is potential one of those solutions.

At the same time, assured isolation does not provide the answer to what happens at the end of the period of time waste is stored in an "assured isolation" facility. It would be best to site an assured isolation facility where if necessary the waste could be disposed if finally approved.

2. Do you envision a market for such a facility in the next ten years? If so, please elaborate.

If the past ten years are any example of what will happen in the next ten years, there will be no facility other than the ones serving the Atlantic and the Northwest Compacts. Without a solution there will be many states that will have no option for the disposal of B and C low-level radioactive waste. Assured isolation may be an option that the public will accept.

3. Can you provide any estimate of the amount of waste, either regionally or nationally, for which disposal capacity will not be available during this same period of time?

Obviously, the answer to this question depends on many factors including what happens in Utah, Texas, and South Carolina. If now new facilities are constructed and the Atlantic Compact does not change their mind, there will be 5,000 to 10,000 cubic feet of B and C waste that will not have a home. In addition, there will be DOE waste which is greater than 10 nanocuries that will be orphan as well. In addition, as power plants close there were be an even greater need for a facility that can accept B and C.