

From: "John Grove" <wetlands@chaffeeco.net>
To: <LES_EIS@nrc.gov>
Date: 3/18/04 4:16PM
Subject: Docket No. 70-3103

2/4/04
69FR5374

115

Please find the attached comments for inclusion in the Scoping Process for the LES application.

Please confirm that you received the file, intact.

John Grove
wetlands@chaffeeco.net
303.249.6013

RECEIVED
2004 MAR 19 PM 1:10
Rules and Directives
Branch
USFWS

E-IDS = ADM-03
Call = T. Johnson (TJS)
M. Wong (MCW)

Template = ADM-013

Via Email (LES_EIS@nrc.gov), Facsimile: 301.415.5398

Ms. Melanie Wong, Public Contact
Nuclear Regulatory Commission

RE: Docket No. 70-3103, Public Comment regarding Scoping and Content Issues for EIS and other relevant information review

As provided in section 5 (Federal Register vol 69 no. 23) "Notice of Intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed LES gas centrifuge uranium enrichment facility", (aka the Project) I would like to provide the following comments for consideration and review with regard to establishing the necessary scope and content of the EIS and associated investigation/documentation requirements.

Transportation and Socioeconomics:

Implicit logistics of both supply and ultimate disposition of waste materials, the Project involves the interstate transport of nuclear waste and/or other special nuclear materials. Further, the Project poses direct potential impacts to the economies of both regional States and the entire Nation through the supply of materials necessary to electricity generation, and the jobs associated with transportation, waste management, containment, etc.

In recognition of the above issues and other regional and national implications of the Project, it is incumbent upon the applicant to demonstrate the Project has the full understanding and support of the Western Interstate Energy Board. This board was formed under public law, and international compact with representatives appointed by the Governors of Western States and Canadian provinces. Among many charges, the board is responsible for communication and cooperation among its membership with specific regard to the development and management of nuclear energy projects.

I have been in direct communication with Mr. Rick Grice (Colorado Representative) and Douglas Larson, Executive Director of the WIEB. As of March 15, neither of these Gentlemen are aware of the project, and both confirmed that they had not received any communication from the applicant regarding the proposal, whatsoever. Because of the applicants continuing apparent disregard for regional communication, I specifically request that the applicants be required to initiate formal discussions with the WIEB, and further, request that the President of the United States exercise existing authority to appoint an ex officio member to the WIEB to directly oversee this interaction and restore the WIEB to its proper position concerning the review and oversight of the Project.

Cumulative Effects:

Certainly it can be argued that the nuclear industry generates waste with the longest management responsibility, measured in thousands of years. As such, higher levels of scrutiny are required regarding the ultimate disposition of these materials, as well as all the possible (intentional/unintentional) consequences of waste storage. Because no necessary reprocessing facilities exist currently anywhere in the USA, it is necessary to evaluate the possible effects of "temporary storage" extending into decades or longer at this location, including associated water resources, air quality, geology and soils, and long term effects stated below.

Cumulative effects on Health, Occupational and Public:

The applicant has a similar facility operating for approximately 20 years in Almelo Netherlands. The applicant in this and other proceedings has represented that their European gas centrifuge enrichment plant is safe and that workers' "normal exposures" are safe. However, full attention must be given to the eventuality of the upset conditions and the additional radiation to which workers are exposed at such times.

Increased rates and varieties of cancers, as well as increased rates of birth defect have been the most common allegations against nuclear industry facilities. To ensure the safety of neighbors, children, and future generations, the applicant should be required to prove that workers at their other similar plants have not realized increased cancer rates or increased birth defect rates in their children.

Proper Epidemiologic studies of workers with 20+ years exposure experience at gas centrifuge uranium enrichment plants are necessary to determine if workers are exposed to increased cancer risks (not just lung, but also bladder, pituitary, and other organ cancers), or if there are birth defect risks to their children. The evaluation of employee accident rates through standard safety records (i.e. trips, back injuries, etc.) cannot reveal anything about cancer rates. It is insufficient to simply interview a small number of workers, or the Mayor of Almelo to determine if they know of any workers with cancer. Similarly, chest x-rays of present workers are equally insufficient.

Urenco/LES has gas centrifuge uranium enrichment plants that have operated for over 20 years in Europe, so it is an undeniable fact that a relevant population of workers exists which could be studied. The applicants should be required to disclose and present such a study if one has been done. Available data show that 13 "reportable" worker events occurred at Almelo from 1972-1984. Further, 14 workers were found to have uranium (over 50 micrograms) in their urine. Those workers, of course, must be included in the epidemiologic study. Quite simply, if the applicant has not done such a study, they have not adequately proven the safety of their process with respect to cancer and birth defect risks, as required.

Cumulative Effects, ecology, and public health

Given the recent discovery of significant evidence of bioaccumulation in the food chain (i.e. insects, mammals) near the enrichment facility at Paducah, Kentucky, it is imperative to consider the possibility for similar situations arising from construction of the Project. Particularly in regard to the long term (i.e. decades) storage requirements that are likely to result from operation of the Project, it is especially important to consider the possible fate of these pollution issues. Further, because of the projects location being near or within the "funnel" of the central American flyway, and the existence of many common songbirds and other unlisted bird species which migrate through the area, it is important to consider issues associated with insect control, incidental habitats, etc that may be involved, and or possibly enter and accumulate/concentrate in the food chain. Demonstration of compliance with all regulations and international compacts regarding migratory bird species should be required.

Cumulative impacts, endangering public safety:

In a thorough review of the applicants submittal, it seems that all issues relating to "security" of the plant relate only to traditional personnel and physical security issues. Given the recent and lengthy history of former URENCO employee A.Q. Khan and his active role as the well-

spring of proprietary and classified technology information to terrorist and rogue nations, it is more than obvious that special security concerns be required of the applicant. Such issues are beyond the scope of my ability to articulate, but suffice it to say that numerous reports exist regarding URENCO employees and their attendant suppliers were found with stacks of classified documents in their private homes, clearly indicating that security of all internal information has been a documented and serious problem at other URENCO/LES facilities. Moreover, there appears to be a clear track record of denial and deception regarding the "origin" of technology found in centrifuge designs in Iran, Lybia, Pakistan and North Korea. Because the applicant is a consortium of foreign state owned interests combined with other undisclosed "partners" and corporate citizens, it is imperative that a full and thorough investigation be conducted regarding all aspects of national security.

Waste Management:

The applicant is intentionally vague regarding ultimate disposition of the nuclear and other wastes from the Project. Any and all options which are conceivable or plausible must be given full investigation regarding EIS-type issues as if they were complete and intact with this project. Further, regarding the depleted uranium, these tails should in fact be considered a waste as current market conditions would dictate. It must be required that a use not only exist for the materials, but that a rational nexus exists for the tails to in fact be recovered as a resource, including demonstration of letters of intent, etc. A new tire manufacturing plant would not be absolved of regulations for its production wastes simply because a market exists "somewhere" for the used tires they create, and this should be the same situation here, especially considering the nature of these corrosive wastes.

My last comment concerns the necessity of firm requirement of a complete, rigorous and thorough evaluation of the "no action" alternative regarding this project. Rather than the typical cursory verbal disposition of this alternative, I insist there be an exhaustive evaluation of the imperative for this project with specific regard to the current and future projected oversupply of nuclear power plant fuels resulting from the "blending down" of former Soviet materials. Further, the role of the nuclear power industry projected in the next 20 years appears to be questioned in available literature, such that it is difficult to imagine the actual market need for the product in view of existing, known supplies.

Given the lack of communication from the applicant with regional interests as required through the actions of the WIEB, their questionable track record with the handling of internal classified technologies, apparent lack of accountability regarding acknowledgment of URENCO technology in centrifuge designs found throughout the nuclear world, and the vague roles/ownership/security issues surrounding the foreign interests of the applicant's consortium, I certainly hope NRC staff will redouble efforts and requirements necessary to prove this Project is even necessary in the first place.

John Grove, P.O. Box 1549 Buena Vista, CO 81211

Cc: Douglas Larson, Executive Director, Western Interstate Energy Board
Rick Grice, Colorado rep/member, Western Interstate Energy Board