

May 23, 2005

QO

U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Attn: Mr. G. Michael McCann
Region III
2443 Warrenville Road, Suite 210
Lisle, IL 60532-4352

Subject: License # 34-00507-16, Docket # 030-05626

In support of processing an amendment request, you had recently asked that the NASA Glenn Research Center (GRC) provide more detailed information about our ultimate disposal plans for the agency's activated stainless steel clad cadmium control rods. GRC currently possesses these rods under the reactor license TR-3 (docket number 050-00030) for the Plum Brook Station Research Reactor Facility. NASA's request to transfer the control rods to GRC's byproduct materials license is a consequence of (1) needing to transfer these items off of the reactor license to facilitate decommissioning and license termination, and (2) the lack of a commercially-available disposal pathway for these items resulting in the need for an interim storage solution.

Recognizing historical ties between NASA and the Department of Energy (DOE) regarding the operation of the Plum Brook Station Research Reactor, the agency had previously indicated it would expect the DOE to accept these items for disposal at a DOE facility. NASA has provided personnel in the DOE's Office of Environmental Management with information regarding this collaboration between the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) and NASA as well as records of fuel disposition to the AEC upon shutdown of the NASA reactor.

On May 16, 2005, the GRC's Radiation Safety Officer, Reactor Decommissioning Project's Senior Engineer, and Project Manager participated in a telephone conference call with two key personnel from the DOE's Office of Environmental Management. The DOE representatives were James Joyce from the Office of Federal Disposal Options, and Christine Gelles, director of the Office of Commercial Disposal Options. During the conference call,

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DOE acknowledged the uniqueness of this situation in which NASA had conducted research for AEC purposes. DOE also recognized that the activated control rods are not a commercial waste and could not meet criteria for existing commercial disposal. While the precise path forward was not identified due to pending legal matters, DOE did indicate that they would provide federal disposal for NASA's control rods. Potential disposal sites include current facilities in Washington and Nevada as well as a future site planned for Texas. Transfer of the rods should occur no sooner than 2006 and no later than 2010.

Should you have questions or require additional information, you may contact the GRC Radiation Safety Officer, Mr. Christopher Blasio, at (216) 433-6520.

Vernon W. Wessel, Director
Safety and Mission Assurance

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