

From: Harold Scott
To: Ralph Meyer
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Subject: McGaf... on hot cells

RES

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MR. PAPERIELLO: I would note that a substantial portion of my SES core is female.

COMMISSIONER McGAFFIGAN: Good.

You sent a letter recently to the head of Argonne National Laboratory about their hot cell facility that supports our work in a variety of areas particular fuel cladding.

Can you update us as to where that stands.

MR. PAPERIELLO: Yes, I can. I spoke to him late yesterday. They are concerned about supporting us.

What I would hope to get to the Commission because I need it in my own mind, everybody's mind within the next two weeks is where we are going.

The problem with the Argonne hot cells is they don't meet today's DOE safety criteria. And probably to refurbish them would take a lot of money. He told me that DOE made a decision that they would put their money in maintaining the hot cells at Idaho, not at Argonne.

As you may be aware, because of agreements between DOE and the Governor of Idaho, it is just about impossible to get spent fuel into the state of Idaho. A lot of what we want to accomplish can be accomplished without the hot cells. Some work involves cladding, just unirradiated cladding and some involve irradiated cladding.

We need hot cells to remove fuel from cladding. We think that could be done elsewhere. The problem right now is integral testing. And what I have to do with my staff is to take a look at what our options are. Can we get it done somewhere else?

Can we appeal to DOE and make a one time exemption to allow us to use the hot cell for one project? These are a number of options.

COMMISSIONER McGAFFIGAN: The latter option is, all the other options, I'm starting to hold my wallet. So I know we are a safety agency and it may sound a little strange for a safety agency to ask DOE to waive its current safety standard for a period of time for us to complete our work. But that is exactly what exemptions are for. And we do them occasionally appropriately after thinking about it. And there are ways you can put additional procedures in place to get the equivalent standard.

But I urge you to keep us informed.

MR. PAPERIELLO: Certainly.

COMMISSIONER McGAFFIGAN: If there is something that we can help you with, the higher levels in DOE possibly. They are asking for a lot from us these days.

I heard something over lunch, I'll just say it very briefly. We were talking about reprocessing and recycling.....

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