

May 10, 2007

The Honorable Harry Reid
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Reid:

I am responding to your letter, dated March 5, 2007, to Major General Galen Jackman, of the U.S. Department of the Army (Army), which was referred to the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). Your constituent asked about radioactive shipments from Sequoyah Fuels Corporation in Gore, OK, to the Nevada Test Site.

Last year, section 316 of the John Warner National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007, P.L. 109-364 (Act) directed the Army to transport to an approved disposal site all Federal government furnished uranium being stored at the Sequoyah Fuels Corporation facility in Gore, Oklahoma. The Gore facility is undergoing decommissioning and decontamination. It is our understanding that depleted uranium tetrafluoride was being transported to the Nevada Test Site for disposal in accordance with the Act. Depleted uranium, a byproduct of the uranium enrichment process, and its chemical compounds, have very low radiotoxicity levels. The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) regulates shipment of this material. In addition, DOT has other regulations that apply to carriers of these materials. These package and carrier regulations assure the safety of this material during transit.

The NRC is aware of one incident of suspected contamination, presumably the incident to which you refer, during one of these shipments. The Incident Notification Report filed with the National Response Center, a government-wide center established as the sole federal point of contact for reporting oil and chemical spills, indicated that possible contamination was noticed on one of the trucks during unloading. Numerous Federal and State agencies, including the DOT, the U.S. Department of Energy, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the State of Nevada, Division of Environmental Protection were all notified for any appropriate response action. Although the NRC was notified, our agency did not have a role in following up on this incident; therefore, your letter has been forwarded to Mr. Darwin Morgan, Director of Public Affairs at the Nevada Site Office, who has agreed to respond to your constituent's concern.

Sincerely,

/RA W. Kane Acting for/

Luis A. Reyes
Executive Director
for Operations

cc: Darwin Morgan
Nevada Site Office

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Luis A. Reyes
Executive Director
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