

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY
COMMISSION

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TUX-3208, TUXEDO, NEW YORK 1/19/79

DR. JOSEPH M. HENDRIE
CHAIRMAN, U.S. NUCLEAR
REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, DC 20555

DEAR DR. HENDRIE: ✓

UNION CARBIDE HAS BEFORE THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION A REQUEST PERTAINING TO THE SNM INVENTORY AT THE STERLING FOREST LABORATORY. THE LENGTH OF TIME TAKEN BY THE COMMISSION IN ADDRESSING THIS MATTER HAS, AND WILL CONTINUE TO HAVE, AN ADVERSE EFFECT ON OPERATION. WE REQUEST YOUR HELP IN EXPEDITING THIS MATTER TO ASSURE A DEPENDABLE SUPPLY OF MEDICAL RADIOISOTOPES FROM THE UCNR.

OUR NOVEMBER 10, 1978 SUBMITTAL TO DR. CLIFFORD V. SMITH RESPONDED TO AN ISSUE OF SNM INVENTORY RAISED BY THE COMMISSION. WE REQUESTED AN EXEMPTION WHICH WOULD ADDRESS UNIQUE ASPECTS OF OUR OPERATION THAT THE REGULATIONS APPEAR TO IGNORE. PAGE EIGHT OF OUR SUBMITTAL DISCUSSES THE CRITICAL NATURE OF TIMING IN DETAIL. WE HAVE COMMUNICATED WITH THE STAFF AND CONCUR WITH THEIR RECOMMENDED ACTION. AT THIS TIME WE UNDERSTAND THAT IT IS IN THE CONCURRENCE CHAIN OF THE COMMISSION.

THE LACK OF TIMELY ACTION HAS FORCED US TO DELAY THE RECEIPT OF REACTOR FUEL PRESENTLY STORED AT THE FABRICATION PLANT IN FRANCE. WE CAN DELAY NO LONGER BECAUSE OF THE EXPIRATION DATE ON THE IMPORT LICENSE GOVERNING THE RETURN OF SNM TO THE UNITED STATES. THE OPERATING INVENTORY OF SNM HAS BEEN DROPPED TO CRITICALLY LOW LEVELS TO ALLOW RECEIPT OF THE FIRST OF NUMEROUS SMALL SHIPMENTS OF FUEL. THE DROP IN INVENTORY AND THE SEGMENTING OF FUEL SHIPMENTS ARE ONLY MADE NECESSARY BY THE LACK OF TIMELY ACTION ON THE MATTER PENDING WITH THE COMMISSION; WE SEE NO OTHER SOUND TECHNICAL REASON. SINCE RELIABILITY OF THE UNINTERRUPTED SUPPLY OF MEDICAL RADIOISOTOPES IS INVOLVED, WE RESPECTIVELY SEEK YOUR HELP IN EXPEDITING THIS MATTER.

SINCERELY,

MARCUS H. VOTH
MANAGER, NUCLEAR OPERATIONS
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