



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

May 20, 1994

Docket No. 50-606

Dr. Robert Charles Brown, President
Arkansas Tech University
Office of the President
Russellville, Arkansas 72801-2222

Dear Dr. Brown:

I would like to thank you for the invitation to discuss the status of the construction permit (CP) application from Arkansas Tech University (ATU) at the interim assessment meeting and for the tour of the Center for Energy and Environmental Studies on April 4, 1994.

NRC review of the CP application is approximately half complete. We are waiting for a reply from ATU to several questions that we have asked. At this point no outstanding technical issues have been identified that would impede the issuance of a CP. I estimate that a CP could be issued about six to eight months after your staff replies to the remaining questions along with any additional questions that may be requested by NRC.

The question of the cost of decommissioning the facility was discussed at the interim assessment meeting. Although we cannot predict what future decommissioning costs will be, I can give you information on the actual costs of decommissioning facilities similar to yours and the estimated decommissioning cost that have been submitted to NRC to meet the decommissioning funding regulations.

The University of Texas incurred costs of \$550,000 to decommission their 250 kW TRIGA reactor. This cost estimate does not include their internal staff time but does include the cost of the development of the decommissioning plan. The majority of these costs were incurred between 1990 and 1992. The total cost of decommissioning the Michigan State (250 kW TRIGA) reactor in 1989 was less than \$500,000.

Some estimates of decommissioning costs that have been submitted to NRC (in 1988 dollars) are Aerotest (250 kW TRIGA conversion) \$406,000, Kansas State (250 kW TRIGA Mark II) \$652,000, Reed College (250 kW TRIGA) \$500,000, University of California, Irvine (250 kW TRIGA) \$600,000, and University of Maryland (250 kW TRIGA conversion) \$1,186,000.

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In the area of fees for nonprofit educational institutions, the staff believes that with the recent rulemaking restoring the generic exemption this issue is closed. The Commission stated in background for the proposed rule that "the Commission concluded that the new annual fees would jeopardize the educational and related research benefits provided by a number of colleges and universities." The notice of proposed rulemaking later stated that "new information and fresh thinking have persuaded the entire Commission that restoration of the exemption reflects a sound policy choice that avoids placing in jeopardy valuable educational resources that are indispensable to the nuclear industry, to numerous other educational activities, to the NRC itself and to the public at large." The FEDERAL REGISTER notices of the proposed and final rules restoring the generic exemption from annual fees for nonprofit educational institutions are enclosed.

If you or your staff have any questions about the NRC licensing process for your CP or the operating license for the ATU TRIGA reactor, please contact me at (301) 504-1127.

Sincerely,

Original signed by:

Alexander Adams, Jr., Senior Project Manager
Non-Power Reactors and Decommissioning
Project Directorate
Division of Operating Reactor Support
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Enclosures:
As stated

cc w/enclosures:
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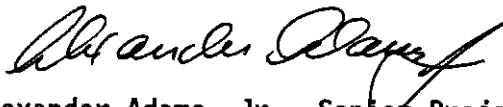
Dr. Robert Charles Brown

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Arkansas Tech University

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