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Docket: NRC-2011-0086

University of Missouri; License Amendment Request

Comment On: NRC-2011-0086-0001

Curators of the University of Missouri, Columbia, MO, Pickard Hall; License Amendment Request, Opportunity to Provide Comments, Request a Hearing and to Petition for Leave to Intervene

Document: NRC-2011-0086-DRAFT-0003

Comment on FR Doc # 2011-11113

Submitter Information

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RULES AND DIRECTIVES
STAFF
NRC

General Comment

Please see attached document for my comment.

Attachments

NRC-2011-0086 Pixley Statement

SUNSI Review Complete
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Add = K. Street (KNS1)

Pixley Statement NRC-2011-0086

My name is Mary Pixley.

I am a member of the staff of the Museum of Art and Archaeology.

I have been employed at Pickard Hall for almost four years.

The following comments represent my own personal experiences and opinions.

About a year after arriving here, I was informed in a flippant fashion that there was radiation in the basement of Pickard Hall, which houses the offices, preparation labs, and much of the storage facilities of the Museum of Art and Archaeology. No concern was expressed about the situation in Pickard Hall by the University even though the University knew of the radiation in the 1970s when the Museum was installed in this building. A 1975 report by Dorothy Nightingale, Emeritus Professor of Chemistry of the University makes this clear. I doubt that I would have chosen to work here if I had been properly informed of the presence of residual radiation resulting from the uranium ore extraction project.

We employees were not accorded a choice in being classified as radiation workers. We were told that if we did not sign the piece of paper, we would not receive dosimeters. We were in shock. We signed.

The hot spots are numerous in this building, both in the basement and in other areas. Thanks to some of these "hot" spots being labeled, I avoid those areas strategically moving around them. I do not believe that all of the "hot" spots have been labeled, which I find objectionable. Some of the "lesser hot" spots were just marked with some black tape, which will eventually disappear through wear. While it was stated that the highest quarterly result from a dosimeter worn by a person in Pickard Hall is 13 millirems, if one spends more time near the hot spots, that would obviously change the dose. Imagine working in a building dodging what may be potentially dangerous areas that you still need to get near because of the needs of the job. Imagine not being sure where all those areas are located.

Cancer is an obvious health risk in relation to radiation exposure. Some people might be more sensitive to radiation than others. I hope that neither my colleagues nor me are exceptionally sensitive to radiation, but we may be. Who knows whether the residual radiation in this building was a factor in the death from cancer of at least two people who worked in this building.

The University is requesting an indefinite delay and thus wants to leave the radiation in the building for an undefined period. With no declared plans and no provisions at this point for dealing with the complexities of moving a museum filled with precious art and artifacts from around the world and throughout time, it would seem the University's only plan is to leave the Museum in Pickard Hall forever. One of the University's reasons for requesting a delay is that Pickard Hall is on the National Register of Historic Buildings, and the University does not wish to jeopardize this status. As the University has already completely renovated two other buildings also on that register, this has no relevance in their request for an indefinite delay.

I certainly understand that moving a museum and remediation are no easy tasks. The Museum of Art and Archaeology is a notable museum filled with many world-class artifacts and art objects. I

feel that the University should undertake the moving of the Museum and remediation of the building. Thus, I feel that something like a ten to twelve year deadline should be embraced by the University. This would allow the University time to find housing for the Museum, the orderly packing and movement of objects, and the time for the complete removal of radioactive substances from underneath the floors, drain pipes, behind walls and various ducts, as well as the attic. The radiation permeates the building, and I believe that it should be removed for the safety and peace of mind of employees of the University. I hope that the NRC and University of Missouri will work together at finding a suitable solution that respects both the employees and cultural heritage embodied in the Museum of Art and Archaeology.