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Vice President

NRC PUBLIC

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-61(43FR49811) (20)

December 26, 1978

Mr. Samuel J. Chilk, Secretary
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D.C. 20555

Attn: Docketing & Service Branch

Dear Mr. Chilk:

These comments on proposed rulemaking for management and disposal of low level radioactive wastes are submitted in response to your Federal Register Notice (43 FR 207) of October 25, 1978.

Con Edison's principal comment addresses question 1. of the Notice which deals with the Commission conclusion that a NEPA environmental impact statement should be prepared on actions to develop more explicit criteria and regulations for low-level waste management.

Con Edison does not disagree with the idea that important on-going programs such as low-level radioactive waste management should be the subject of recurring review and search for alternatives. We are concerned, however, that the relatively lengthy NEPA impact statement process will defer resolution of the immediate need of the utility industry for establishment of additional shallow land burial sites.

The program under which existing sites were selected and are managed has worked well. Presently there are six shallow land burial sites. Of these six sites, two have been closed and a third has a restriction on how much material it can receive each month. This company and others use the Barnwell site located in South Carolina. Were the Barnwell site to cease operation without an alternate proximate site being available,

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as is now the case, many utilities including Con Edison would be burdened with the logistics and additional expense of transporting low-level wastes excessive distances. To prevent this situation from developing, an immediate specific federal policy is required as a basis for establishment of additional shallow land burial sites

Very truly yours,

William J. Cahill, Jr.
Vice President