



UNITED STATES  
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20555

MAR 5 1980

PDR

The Honorable A. Eugene Rennels  
Mayor of City of West Chicago  
475 Main Street  
West Chicago, Illinois 60185

Dear Mayor Rennels:

This is in reply to your December 28, 1979 letter addressed to our Mr. Nixon concerning the Kerr-McGee site in West Chicago. We wish to assure you of our continuing concern for this site. We have taken, and will continue to take actions which we believe will protect the public and the environment. Our responses to the specific issues in your letter are as follows:

1. The improved air sampling and radiation detection program is described under Item 3 below. This program was established to provide information needed to assure the protection of the public and the environment. With respect to the elevated background reading obtained at the Eberline Instrument Corporation south of the site, the increase occurred in October, 1979, lasted two days, and has not recurred. The reason for the increase (if indeed it was a real increase and not instrument or analytical error) has not been identified.
2. NRC's Office of Inspection and Enforcement in Glen Ellyn periodically reviews air-sampling data to assess off-site exposures near the Kerr-McGee site. Potential off-site exposures from long-lived radioisotopes have been below applicable Federal standards. Calculations, based on conservative assumptions, indicate that potential off-site exposures from short-lived radioisotopes (Radon-220, -222 and progeny) are also below Federal standards. To continue to confirm these conclusions, NRC will have Argonne National Laboratory perform special sampling and analysis for these radioisotopes over an extended period of time.
3. In addition to the air-sampling program required of Kerr-McGee, which is evaluated periodically by NRC, the NRC has installed two continuous air-sampling stations for the Kerr-McGee site and is installing six dosimeter stations to determine direct environmental radiation exposures attributable to the Kerr-McGee site, and one additional air-sampling station. Also, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has installed an air sampler directly east of the disposal site and the Illinois Department of Public Health has installed dosimeters near the site. We believe this total program provides adequate information to assess airborne and direct radiation from the site to the environment.

8006170 255

4. Regarding your request for the Kerr-McGee security plan, detailed security plans normally are withheld from the public domain as a precautionary measure; however, Kerr-McGee and its contractor, Gloss Guard and Investigation Service, Inc., have been in contact with city and county law enforcement agencies. In November, 1976 Kerr-McGee officials committed to the following actions to further secure the facility from public access:

- "1. The site perimeter fence will be restored to its original height of 6 feet above ground level and 3 strands of barbed wire will be placed atop those areas of the perimeter fence which presently are devoid of barbed wire.

- "2. Action will be taken to establish a five-foot clear zone exterior to the site perimeter fence. The presence of shrubs and trees in this zone will be minimized to the extent possible.

- "3. Signs bearing the conventional radiation caution colors and symbol and the wording, 'Caution - Radioactive Material' will be attached to the site perimeter fence at no more than 50-foot intervals.

- "4. The entire site perimeter fence will be patrolled at least once every 8 hours."

NRC personnel from the Glen Ellyn office have confirmed that the above actions had been completed and have periodically checked to assure that these measures are still in effect.

5. Kerr-McGee is committed to train personnel involved in the decommissioning work in fire protection and fire prevention techniques and to supply fire extinguishing equipment. Further, NRC's Region III office has informed us that Kerr-McGee has met with your local fire department personnel and has discussed contamination control as it would apply to fire-fighting efforts at Kerr-McGee. If you desire further training for your fire department, please contact the NRC Region III office in Glen Ellyn.

In regard to evacuation plans, the NRC staff does not believe that a fire at the Kerr-McGee facility poses an eminent radiological threat off-site; however, we will reevaluate this accident potential and inform you of our findings in the near future. Evacuation plans, when needed, are normally prepared by state and local governments, and not the Federal government. The Illinois Emergency Services and Disaster Agency would probably

be the state agency having responsibility for doing this. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has been designated by the President as the lead Federal agency for all off-site nuclear emergency planning and response; NRC has been directed to review FEMA findings and determinations on the adequacy and capability of implementation of state and local plans. NRC also makes decisions with regard to the overall state of emergency preparedness for nuclear accidents.

Sincerely,

*/s/ Davis*

*for*

William J. Dircks, Director  
Office of Nuclear Material Safety  
and Safeguards