



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

November 22, 1989

The Honorable Edward J. Markey
United States House of
Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Markey:

I have received your letter of October 31, 1989, in which you expressed concerns about the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's (NRC's) approach to assessing the need for additional controls on tritium. I should note that the NRC has deferred action on this matter pending the outcome of the Department of Energy's (DOE's) inquiries into the tritium shipping discrepancies because DOE has the lead role in investigating discrepancies involving transactions between the DOE facility and DOE's overseas customers. Also, there has been no indication thus far that the discrepancies resulted from any unauthorized activities, wrongdoing by an NRC licensee, or diversion of tritium.

Before we reach a final conclusion on the need for additional or improved controls on tritium, further review and information on the shipping discrepancies and the possibility of tritium diversion are needed. In this regard, the NRC staff must first complete its review of DOE's October 23, 1989 report on the investigation. We also understand DOE has recently initiated a special safeguards review to determine whether theft or diversion occurred. The results of this effort will be included in our review. In the interim, I am enclosing our preliminary responses to the specific questions posed in your letter. I will inform you of our final conclusions on this matter promptly upon the completion of our review.

Sincerely

Kenneth M. Carr
Kenneth M. Carr

Enclosure: As stated

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