



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

May 8, 1981

OFFICE OF THE  
CHAIRMAN

The Honorable Richard L. Ottinger, Chairman  
Subcommittee on Energy Conservation and Power  
Committee on Energy and Commerce  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The Department of Energy, along with the Department of State and the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, has for some time supported and provided funding for the Reduced-Enrichment in Research and Test Reactors (RERTR) Program. The NRC also has supported and monitored this program and has a strong interest in its timely completion.

As you know, this program was undertaken to facilitate a significant reduction in US-supplied inventories of highly-enriched uranium (HEU) at dispersed sites of research and test reactors abroad. Reducing the quantities of weapons-grade enriched uranium in circulation will contribute significantly to the reduction of worldwide safeguards and proliferation concerns.

The program includes a number of joint activities designed to demonstrate the feasibility of utilizing medium-enriched (MEU 45%) and low-enriched (LEU ~19.85%) fuels in such reactors. Operators of research reactors in a number of foreign nations have agreed to participate in joint analytical studies and/or experimental verification activities in support of this U.S. nonproliferation initiative. Since conversion to LEU fuels would be most effective, the potential efficacy of such fuels for the majority of research reactor applications should be established promptly.

It has come to the Commission's attention that the budget allocations for this program may be reduced to levels which may preclude timely achievement of program objectives. The resulting deferral could undermine both the credibility of U.S. policy in the international nuclear community and the potential for future foreign cooperation and support of other nuclear technical initiatives which the U.S. might wish to propose. This applies particularly to those countries which have made major commitments to this program as a result of U.S. pressure.

We urge your consideration of a funding level for the RERTR Program that would permit its expeditious completion and the benefits of the program in terms of significant reductions in HEU exports from the U.S. to be realized.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "J. Hendrie".

Joseph M. Hendrie  
Chairman

cc: Rep. Carlos Moorhead

8105150322