



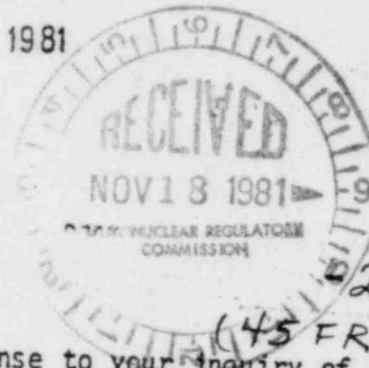
UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20555

81-245

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OCT 16 1981



SECRETARY
IG & SERVICE
BANCH

The Honorable John Warner
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Warner:

The following information is provided in response to your inquiry of September 30, 1981 concerning your constituent, Karen Irvin, and her interest in the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's (NRC) activities, in regard to deregulation for disposal of radioactive medical and research wastes.

On March 11, 1981, NRC amended its regulation 10 CFR 20 to permit licensees greater leeway in disposing of liquid scintillation media and animal carcasses containing tracer levels of hydrogen-3 (tritium) or Carbon-14 (for less than 0.05 microcuries per gram). This rule change will primarily affect NRC licensed hospitals and medical research institutions, and will help conserve waste burial capacity that is already in short supply.

The rule essentially removes any NRC restrictions on the disposal of liquid scintillation media and animal carcasses. It does not authorize disposal of liquid scintillation media (e.g. toluene) into sanitary sewerage, nor does it relieve licensees from complying with other applicable regulations of Federal, State, and local government agencies regarding the disposal of non-radioactive materials. Scintillation media are toxic and flammable, and animal carcasses are sometimes pathogenic. These characteristics, which are a more important health problem than their radioactivity, may require them to be disposed of under applicable Federal, State, and local laws governing chemical and biological hazards.

Before this rule change was initiated by the Commission, a cost/benefit analysis by the staff concluded that such a change was appropriate because:

- (a) it will not pose an unreasonable risk to the health and safety of the public;
- (b) disposal of these wastes in radioactive waste burial grounds is expensive and without benefit commensurate with the expense;
- (c) the flammability of liquid scintillation media (organic solvents) and the decomposition of animal carcasses cause a significant problem in transporting these wastes to burial grounds; and
- (d) these wastes consume a significant portion of radioactive waste burial capacity which is in short supply.

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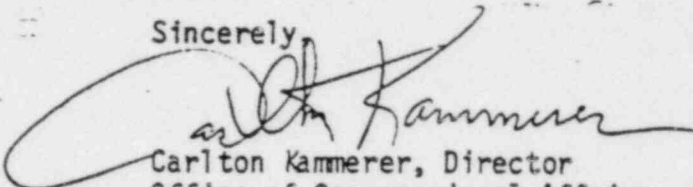
Add: John
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OCT 16 1981

Additional information on this NRC regulatory change is described in the copy of the enclosed Federal Register Notice, 46 FR 16230.

We hope this reply is responsive to the concerns of your constituent. Should further information on this subject be required, please do not hesitate to call us.

Sincerely,



Carlton Kammerer, Director
Office of Congressional Affairs

Enclosure:
46 FR 16230

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

September 30, 1981

Congressional Liason
Nuclear Regulatory Commission
1717 H. Street, N. W.
Washington, D.C. 20555

Dear Sir:

I am writing to bring to your attention the enclosed comments from my constituent, Karen B. Irvin.

I shall appreciate your reviewing this correspondence and preparing a report on the stated problems. Please send your reply in duplicate to the following address:

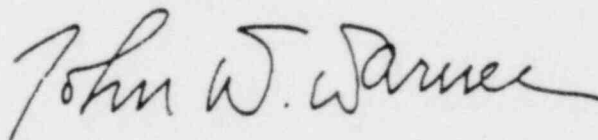
Office of Senator John W. Warner
1100 East Main Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

My constituent and I appreciate your assistance in this matter. I am grateful for all you can do to solve this matter within the existing laws, rules and regulations of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Thank you for your time and courtesy.

With best wishes,

Sincerely,



John W. Warner

JWW/mv
Enclosure 10/6..To OCA for

10/6..To OCA for Direct Reply..Suspense: Oct 23..Docket..81-2157

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1981 AUG 27
Karen B. Quinn
1335 Buckingham Ave.
Arlington, Virginia
22208

The Honorable John W. Warner
6239 Dickson Building
Washington, D.C.
20510

Dear Senator Warner,
I was horrified to discover that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission is attempting to deregulate the disposal of radioactive medical and research wastes, allowing increased disposal of such into our nation's already dangerously polluted sewage systems, rivers, and landfills.
How can any responsible, conscientious American consider, much less perpetrate destruction of all the environmental improvements driven for so ardently by past generations. And citizens? How can anyone with so explicit the slow and torturous demise of an increasingly polluted, genetically defective stock and people?

-2-
future races of mutants will prevail. Russia supremacy over whatever she wishes - is the attitude one of "we're already lost, so why not just shorten the inevitable?" "Come on!"

I speak for all Americans in saying that we do not want to save the millions each year from reducing the costs of radioactive disposal or the expense of our only home. We have the sufficient factories and laboratories to ship them under its approved burial rites or the most easy, we will gladly do it. Bigger with the intelligence to place man and nature before money again.

My job, money, power, and money goes, but we only have one earth. Please help us to maintain and keep it better it, not further corrupt and pollute it and its people.

We must act on this now!
I am

Sincerely yours,
Karen Quinn
Karen Quinn

August 27, 1981