

Joan A. Bishop
1478 Sudden Valley
Bellingham, WA 98226

Ivan Selin, Chairman
United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D.C. 20555

70-3070

Dear Mr. Selin,

The uranium enrichment plant which Louisiana Energy Services proposes to build in Homer, Louisiana, near Forest Grove and Center Springs, should not be constructed.

Residents of these low-income, predominantly black communities are adamantly opposed to the facility because it poses very significant environmental and safety threats to the area. The LES plant would convert natural uranium into fuel (U-235) for nuclear power reactors, in the process creating 4,000 tons of radioactive U-238 waste each year. U-238 remains hazardous for millions of years. The waste would probably be stored on the plant's 450-acre site. Polluting water from the plant would be discharged into the Lake Clairborne watershed, affecting local wells relied on for drinking water. Uranium hexafluoride used in the plant's centrifuges would, if accidentally released, mix with air to create a deadly cloud of hydrogen fluoride.

The need for this dangerous project is questionable. Currently, the Department of Energy operates enrichment plants that are only operating at 50% of capacity, and producing enriched uranium at a lower cost than that to be produced by LES. There is currently a worldwide overcapacity for producing enriched uranium.

The proposal to locate this plant near low-income, black communities smacks very strongly of environmental racism. According to a 1987 study by the United Church of Christ's Commission for Racial Justice, an overwhelming proportion of toxic waste sites, incinerators, and hazardous chemical and industrial operations are sited in poor, minority communities. LES also plans to close and reroute the only road that services Forest Grove and Center Springs.

Considering the local opposition, the questionable need for this facility, the significant threat to the health and safety of the community, and the massive amounts of nuclear waste to be produced, I strongly urge you to deny LES' application to construct this facility. I also urge you to look very closely at the role that environmental racism may have played in the decision to site this plant in Homer.

Most sincerely,



Joan A. Bishop

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