

## Memorandum

DATE: July 3, 1980

SUBJECT: Alleged Radioactive Materials Incident on or  
about June 21, 1980In reply  
refer to: Roberts/x60555

FROM: Associate Director for Hazardous Materials Regulation, DMT-20

TO: Director, Materials Transportation Bureau, DMT-1  
Associate Director for Operations and Enforcement, DMT-10

On Thursday, July 3, 1980, at 6:00 p.m., I received a telephone call from Mr. Warren Olney of KNBC, Burbank, California (213-840-3469). According to Mr. Olney, Tri-State Motor Transit (Joplin, Missouri) picked up a shipment of spent nuclear fuel from UCLA for transportation to Idaho Falls, Idaho. The cask was owned by GE and contained approximately 1 kilo of material from UCLA's research reactor.

According to Mr. Olney, the driver of the truck was unfamiliar with the route, and instead of heading north proceeded east toward Las Vegas. Somewhere en route, he picked up a female companion and proceeded into Las Vegas where he parked the truck and spent the week-end with the female. On or about June 23, the vehicle was driven to Idaho Falls, with or without the female companion, where the shipment was unloaded. The vehicle was then driven to Vallecitos, California, where it was monitored for contamination, and the readings were positive in the floor of the trailer and some of its tie-down chains. Mr. Olney initially attempted to contact Gene Cunningham of GE at Vallecitos (415-862-2211) concerning the matter, and was turned over to a GE public affairs person who gave him little information.

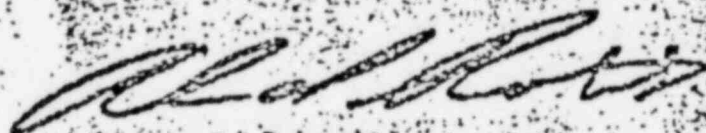
Mr. Olney then contacted John Spivey, a BHCS hazardous materials specialist in San Francisco (8-556-3553), who told him he knew nothing about the matter and suggested that Mr. Olney call me. I quoted Section 171.15(a)(4) to Mr. Olney and told him I had no knowledge as to whether the incident was reported as possibly required by that Section, and then proceeded to hold a diversionary conversation with him relative to our emergency response and hazardous waste regulations, which appeared to be of great interest to him.

I advised Mr. Olney that I would contact Mr. Spivey to seek some clarification of the matter after he indicated he was going to be working on another story until Tuesday morning; (it turns out that

the other story concerns Governor List's intention to completely terminate disposal operations at the Beatty site).

I contacted Mr. Spivey at 7:00 p.m. on July 3 and told him that there was considerable interest on the part of H&C concerning the Tri-State matter. Mr. Spivey indicated he would call one of his contacts at GE in an attempt to develop the facts. Mr. Spivey indicated that he was involved in a Tri-State matter several months ago when contamination was discovered and it turned out that the vehicle had previously transported some earth-moving machinery from a phosphate mine, and the beta contamination was caused by phosphate mining residue on the equipment. I don't believe the material would have been subject to our regulations based on what I have learned at EPA's hazardous waste hearings.

I advised Mr. Spivey that Mr. Olney intended to get in touch with him next week for further information concerning the matter. Since I will not be in the office on Monday, July 7, I thought you and Dr. Paullin should be fully advised of all my knowledge concerning this matter in case H&C decides to make a big thing out of it. A copy of this memorandum is being hand-carried to Mr. Pierson for his information.



Alan I. Roberts

cc: Mr. Pierson

*P.S. This was typed in big hurry  
before my departure. I'm not sure  
of correct spelling for Vallecitos.*

700 Series Certification No. 5942 ( & IAEA Certified )

Cask Assembly Weight 23,310 lbs. - 10,595 Kgs.

Assembly Weight 23,585 lbs. - 10,765 Kgs.

Assembly Drawing No. 289E642G2

Modes of Transportation - Vessel, Motor Vehicle and Rail

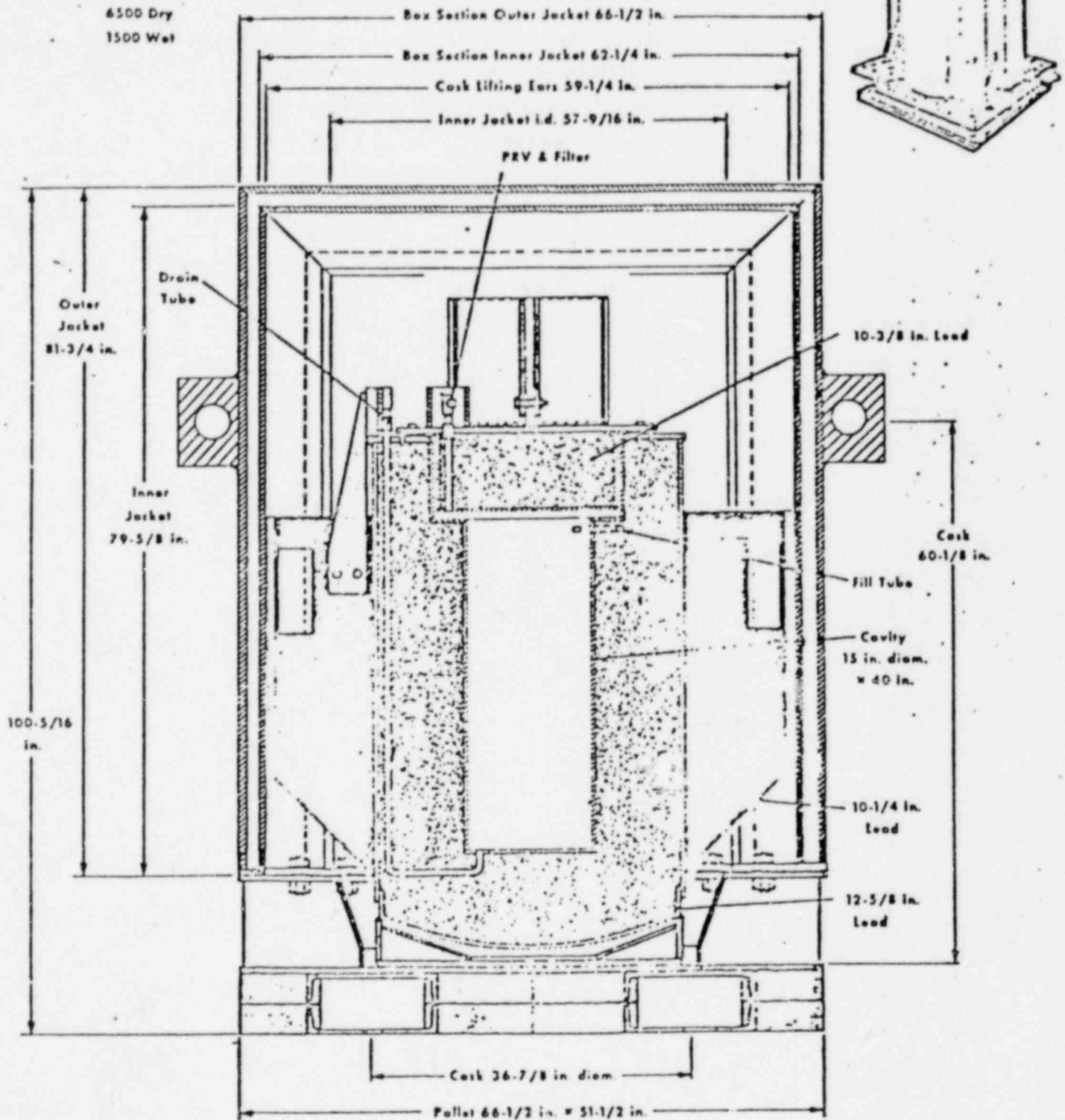
Fire Classification III

AEC License SHM-960 71-46

Wet Load

6500 Dry

1500 Wet



GENERAL ELECTRIC - MODEL 700 SHIELDED CONTAINER  
(WITHOUT CASK EXTENSION)

