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RONALD A. HARLAN
1156 CRESTMOOR DRIVE
BOULDER, CO 80303
telephones (303) 499-4907 (home) (303) 966-5327 (office)

January 05, 1994

John W. N. Hickey
Chief, Enrichment Branch
Division of Fuel Cycle Safety and Safeguards
Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards, Mailstop 4-E4
U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D. C. 20555

Subject: Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Claiborne Enrichment
Center, Claiborne Parish, Louisiana

Dear Mr. Hickey:

I am writing in support of the proposal by Louisiana Energy Services to locate a new centrifuge enrichment facility in Claiborne Parish, Louisiana. I have read a summary of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and have concluded that environmental impacts are acceptable and that potential danger to the public is negligible if the plant is operated as planned. Centrifuge enrichment of uranium is a proven and implemented technology overseas and it is much more energy-efficient than gaseous diffusion.

I urge your office and the NRC in general to support the findings in the draft EIS and discard any "chaff" thrown out by those opposing the facility. If valid criticisms are identified by others from flaws in the EIS (I saw none in the summary available to me), then these must be addressed properly and quickly so that the licensing process can be expedited. I do urge the NRC to expedite licensing for the facility.

Writing as a displaced Louisianian, I am familiar in general terms with the proposed area in north Louisiana. Its essentially rural nature and natural resources are good for an enrichment plant. As a nuclear chemist, I am thrilled that a nuclear industry has seen fit to consider locating an important and beneficial plant in my native state. I still visit relatives there and know first hand the depressed nature of the local economy and the "brain drain" that occurs for Louisiana as a result of too few opportunities for her native sons and daughters that select careers in high technology industries. The proposed facility can only benefit Louisiana in terms of her faltering economy, in keeping some of her brightest young people at home, and in attracting desirable professionals and skilled workers to the area.

As a professional with 30 years experience in nuclear endeavors from teaching in a state university, to research at Department of Energy reactors at the Idaho National Energy Laboratory, to safeguards and environmental instrumentation development at a plutonium facility, I have observed the tremendous improvement in design and safety practices for nuclear facilities. Contrary to the misinformation campaign (claiming adverse safety, economic and

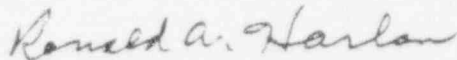
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environmental consequences) being mounted in this matter by some so-called environmentalists and anti-technology doom sayers, I am confident that a plant can be built and safely operated to the benefit of the region and of the nation.

I shall state for the record that nuclear energy must be part of our national energy strategy for the foreseeable future and is one of the most benign and clean forms of energy for the public. Our nation can ill afford to continue the past history of unnecessary delays caused by specious arguments put forth by intervenors in the licensing processes for commercial reactors and processing plants.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ronald A. Harlan".

Ronald A. Harlan, Ph. D.