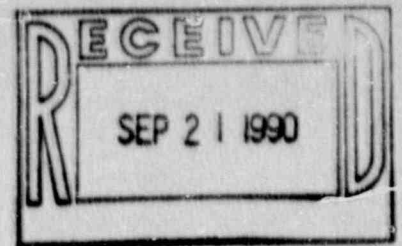


Support Consultants & Associates, Inc.

Route 2, Box 254

De Leon, Texas 76444

(817) 893-2088



September 18, 1990

Docket: 030-20880/90-01

U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission - Region IV
611 Ryan Plaza Drive, Suite 1000
Arlington, Texas 76011

Attn: Mr. A. Bill Beach, Director
Div. of Radiation Safety & Safeguards

Re: Hole Truth, Inc. License No. 35-23304-01

Dear Mr. Beach:

L. D. (Chuck) Robertson, owner operator of Hole Truth, sent me a copy of your letter dated August 21, 1990, which enclosed a Notice of Violation regarding his unauthorized use of antimony-124 found in an inspection by Mr. R. Brown on July 26, 1990. The letter stated that the decision to discontinue my audits of his operations would be deferred until the results of the audit due the last quarter of this year are reviewed. As per our telephone conversation yesterday, I am putting in writing certain facts and opinions that I feel need to be conveyed to the NRC, in hopes of reversing your decision to continue the audits.

First, it is my considered opinion that the possession of antimony-124 does not constitute a health physics problem and when you consider that Hole Truth, Inc. is a one-man-band (Mr. Robertson), the health physics aspects in this citation were virtually non-existent. A reasonable analogy would be an individual driving his car with the inspection sticker out of date by 30 days. The isotope antimony-124 has essentially the same health physics considerations of other isotopes on Hole Truth's license. The fact that it was not on the license was sheer oversight. I remember discussing the addition of it to his license over a year ago, and I assumed it had been added. Irregardless, it is not a severe enough violation to demand additional audit requirements or the threat of an enforcement conference, or the amount of attention the NRC is giving it.

I do not believe the Agency's mandate, although granted by Congress, was meant to break the back of industry by a perfectionistic, legalistic approach to non-problems such as this. Implementation of this type of approach is causing licensees to throw in the towel, or at least consider it. Estimates are that we have already lost 50% of our well logging industry and that another 10-15% of the licensees will be lost in the next two or three years. Increased regulatory compliance is a major factor both in the time and effort it takes to be aware of and comply with the bombardment of government regulations and the economic burden they cause.

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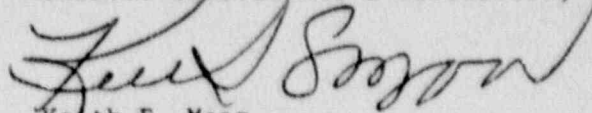
I feel that your department is operating in a overkill mode, and the reasoning "we're saving the public" simply does not apply. Even Senator Boren has backed off his health and safety kick. If the NRC continues to put exaggerated emphasis on non-problems without a broad application of common sense, I believe that it will eventually come down to the point where budget cuts will force the NRC to be more sensitive to industry needs. Recent publications indicate an apparent change at the Commissioner's level of the NRC to promote softening toward reactor construction, which could be interpreted as conceding that the regulatory environment is too harsh in the application of the Congressional mandate on nuclear safety. The analysts indicated, however, that this softening in attitude was too late and that industry is 15 years away from attempting to build another power reactor, and it would only be brought about after higher utility costs have impacted the standard of living of the masses.

Gentlemen, I suggest that your approach to this problem with Hole Truth is over zealous. Economic considerations, although not singularly, are part of the collective load that Hole Truth is carrying and further financial hardships on this one man business will probably bring about its termination. Little entities like this are an integral part of your and my way of life, and we cannot afford to lose an invaluable technology such as it renders. I ask again that you reconsider the discontinuation of the audits. I ask this not for myself, for it is more renveue for me. Actually, I am pleading this case for this licensee and all others in the industry in hopes that the Agency will step back and take a look at an industry that is already down and realize that unless the present approach is changed, you are well on your way to having no licensees at all.

I realize that I may have overstated the situation and have personalized it, but after talking to Chuck Cain and his indication of how this violation was first considered to be such a serious violation, and his mention of coopability on my part, brings me into the situation in a defensive position. As I mentioned over the phone, I am prepared to present my case in your office with the director.

Sincerely,

SUPPORT CONSULTANTS & ASSOCIATES, INC.



Keith E. Moon

KEM:pm
cc: Hole Truth, Inc.