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SEP 19 1990

Docket No. 30-07099
License No. 45-11496-01

The Applied Radiant Energy Corporation
ATTN: James J. Myron, Ph.D.
Vice President of Safety and
Regulatory Compliance
2432 Lakeside Drive
Lynchburg, VA 24501

Gentlemen:

SUBJECT: WESF CAPSULES

The NRC is concerned about the long-term use of WESF capsules in commercial irradiation. In view of these concerns we are particularly interested in the status of any contingency plans or schedules developed by Applied Radiant Energy Company (ARE Co.) for replacement of these capsules. By letter dated September 1, 1988, NRC informed you that "it may be prudent to develop contingency plans for the removal and replacement of the WESF sources" and during a conversation with Ms. Patricia Vacca of the NRC staff earlier this year this recommendation was reiterated.

The reason for our concern over WESF capsules is that, based on information provided by DOE and its contractors over the past two years, it appears that there are numerous uncertainties related to their manufacture, quality control and quality assurance. Therefore, we generally lack confidence that all WESF capsules will retain their integrity during long-term use in commercial irradiator facilities.

In a telephone conversation on September 14, 1990, between Mr. William E. Cline, of our Region II office and you, it was agreed that a meeting would be held between NRC management and ARE Co management on September 25, 1990, to discuss this issue further. During this meeting we suggest that ARE Co. be prepared to discuss the following topics:

1. Contingency plans you have developed or are planning to develop concerning replacement of your existing WESF capsules in the event they are determined to be unreliable from a safety standpoint.
2. Your program for monitoring or evaluating your WESF capsules to determine their integrity while used in the ARE Co. pool.
3. Your technical and financial plans for dealing with a capsule failure incident, including methods for early identification and isolation of the failed capsules and for decontamination for your facility.

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We look forward to the opportunity to meet with you and discuss these issues. If you have any question about this letter please contact Mr. William E. Cline of our Region II office at (404) 331-0346.

Sincerely,

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY
J. PHILIP STOHR

J. Philip Stohr, Director
Division of Radiation Safety
and Safeguards

cc: Commonwealth of Virginia

bcc: Document Control Desk

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