



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

February 15, 1994

The Honorable John Linder
United States House of
Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1004

Dear Congressman Linder:

I am responding to your letter to Chairman Selin, dated January 14, 1994, requesting the status of Nuclear Assurance Corporation's (NAC's) application for Commission approval of a dual-purpose storage and transport spent fuel cask (NAC-STC). As you mentioned in your letter, the NAC-STC would be the first dual-purpose cask certified in the United States. As such, the NAC-STC represents a significant technological achievement in the storage and transportation of spent nuclear fuel. In addition, we are aware that a prospective international user has expressed an interest in using the NAC-STC, once Commission approval is obtained.

NAC's request for approval of the NAC-STC involves two separate applications and staff reviews, one for certification as a transport cask, under 10 CFR Part 71, and the other for approval of a topical report for storage, under 10 CFR Part 72. Once the NAC topical report has been approved, it could be referenced by NAC in a request for a certificate for storage. The reviews, while separate, are being closely coordinated by the Commission's technical review staff. Because of the technological significance of the NAC-STC, the Commission staff has been thorough and deliberate in its reviews. Staff has given the reviews a relatively high priority, even though there are currently no identified U. S. customers, and staff's primary mission is to certify casks for Commission licensees for domestic storage or for domestic transport.

As noted in your letter, the Commission received the original application for the NAC-STC cask in July 1990. After submitting its original application, NAC conducted further testing and made major changes to the cask's impact limiter design. In addition, as part of its review, the staff has had numerous meetings with NAC, and has issued three requests to NAC for additional technical information, on April 11, 1991; December 23, 1992; and December 16, 1993. As a result of these requests, NAC has made major changes in the cask closure design, the closure testing method, the fuel basket material, and the fuel basket design.

At present, the Commission staff is waiting for a response to its December 16, 1993, request for additional information to complete its evaluation of the NAC-STC as a transport cask. We anticipate that a transport certificate for the NAC-STC could be issued within 3 months from the receipt of this information, provided the additional information is responsive to staff's concerns. Once the transport cask certificate is issued, staff believes the review of the topical report for storage could be completed within 1 or 2 additional months.

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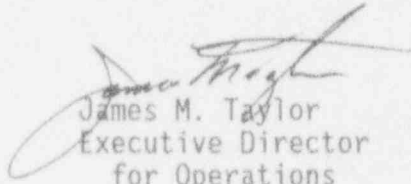
The Honorable John Linder

-2-

For actual domestic use, NAC would then need to apply for a certificate for storage under 10 CFR Part 72, Subpart L. The application would reference the transport certificate issued under Part 71, and would include a safety analysis report that references the approved topical report for storage. In addition, a certificate for storage cannot be issued until completion of a rulemaking as required under the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982, as amended (Public Law 97-425). This rulemaking would take 1 to 2 years to complete.

We appreciate your interest in the safe transportation and storage of nuclear material. I trust that this reply responds to your concerns.

Sincerely,



James M. Taylor
Executive Director
for Operations

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-2-

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Sincerely,

**Original signed by
James M. Taylor**

James M. Taylor
Executive Director
for Operations

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Reviewed by E. Kraus 1/31/94
*See previous concurrences

OFC	STSB*	STSB*	STSB*	STSB*	IMNS:DD *
NAME	EEaston/lg	CChappell	FSturz	CHaughney	WBrach
DATE	1/31/94	1/31/94	1/31/94	1/31/94	2/01/94
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