



UNITED STATES  
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20555

FEB 18 1991

The Honorable Mathew J. Amorello  
State Senator  
State House  
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Mr. Amorello:

This is in response to your letter dated January 23, 1991, in which you requested a summary of the activities that the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) has taken in regards to the Wyman-Gordon Company site in North Grafton, MA.

The Atomic Energy Commission issued the Wyman-Gordon Company several licenses for the possession and use of thorium and uranium between 1958 and 1970. The last license was terminated in 1972. During this time Wyman-Gordon disposed of approximately 50,000 lbs. of magnesium-thorium alloy material containing three percent thorium at the North Grafton site. Other licensed materials were returned to the material suppliers.

In 1983 and 1984 Wyman-Gordon conducted a groundwater sampling program from wells in the immediate vicinity of the disposal area. The first set of sample data indicated wide scatter and a second set was taken in accordance with U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Primary Drinking Water procedures. At this time, Wyman-Gordon and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts concluded that there was no hazard to public drinking water supplies. These findings were, however, not documented.

On September 23, 1990, a Worcester Telegram article questioned the sampling and the safety of the disposed waste materials. On September 27, 1990, State Senator John Houston requested a meeting of Massachusetts and Federal regulators. State Legislator Jack Driscoll, Town of Grafton Selectmen, and representatives the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, and the NRC attended this meeting. At the meeting Wyman-Gordon, the DPH, and the NRC agreed to participate in a split sampling program of groundwater samples taken both on-site and off-site. Following the evaluation of the sampling results, the group also agreed to present the results at a public meeting. That public meeting was held on January 29, 1991, in Grafton, MA.

Based on the groundwater sampling data, the NRC concludes that there is no public health and safety hazard in the use and consumption of groundwater in the vicinity of the disposal area. In addition, the results also indicate that thorium from the disposed material is not migrating from the disposal area. We are enclosing the handout materials from the January 29, 1991, public meeting showing the groundwater sampling data and a summary of the NRC assessment of these data for your information.

On January 28, 1991, we requested that Wyman-Gordon provide us with a dose assessment of the magnesium-thorium disposals and site-specific information for

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Mathew J. Amorello

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our use in performing a independent dose assessment. These dose assessments will determine if the site is suitable for unrestricted release under the current NRC standards. We are also attaching a copy of this letter for your information.

As you requested, we will keep your office informed of all our activities related to the Wyman-Gordon evaluations. If you have any questions, please contact me at 301-492-0558.

Sincerely,  
Timothy C. Johnson, Section Leader  
Decommissioning Section  
Division of Low-Level Waste Management  
and Decommissioning  
Office of Nuclear Material Safety  
and Safeguards

Enclosures: As stated

LLWD 91-013

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Docket File: 40-1650

PDR YES  NO  Category: Proprietary  or CF Only   
ACNW YES  NO

SUBJECT ABSTRACT: SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES RE: WYMAN-GORDON CO. SITE IN NORTH CAROLINA

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