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OCT 17 1989

Mr. Marvin Hiddema, Commissioner
Kent County Administration Building
300 Monroe Avenue, NW
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503

Dear Mr. Hiddema:

On October 10, 1989, I talked with one of your constituents, Mrs. Corinne Carey, who was seeking information regarding low-level radioactive waste disposals by Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) licensees. She was specifically interested in "below regulatory concern" (BRC) practices which could allow certain low-level radioactive waste to be disposed of at other than licensed low-level radioactive waste sites (e.g., a sanitary landfill). At her request, I am sending you the enclosed information which you may find useful.

Mrs. Carey and I discussed the origin of the concept for "below regulatory concern" waste disposals; namely, the Low-Level Radioactive Waste Policy Amendments Act of 1985, P.L. 99-240. I informed Mrs. Carey that although the Commission has issued a statement of policy concerning licensee petitions for such disposals (Enclosure 1), the NRC has, to date, not accepted any petitions under this policy. However, the Commission is aware that the nuclear power industry, through its management and research organizations, is planning to submit such a petition in the near future. The petition would specify, in the industry's view, what low-level radioactive waste could be considered to be "below regulatory concern." The NRC task, at that point, would be to review the merits of this submission and, if warranted, initiate an appropriate rulemaking activity.

In anticipation of receipt of the BRC waste disposal and possibly other exemption requests, the Commission is currently in the process of developing and issuing a broad policy which would define when "practices" involving licensed radioactive material need not be subject to further regulatory control. Enclosure 2 is a Federal Register notice which sought public comment on the policy's provisions. Over 230 comment letters have been received and the issues raised have been considered in the Commission's policy development effort.

Mrs. Carey also requested and was provided information on potential health effects from low-level exposure to ionizing radiation. If you have further interest on this subject or require specific information on related subjects,

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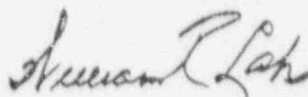
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Mr. Marvin Hiddema

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please write or call me at (301) 492-3774. I want to assure you that it is our goal to protect the health and safety of the public. As a result, the issues raised by Mrs. Carey are taken very seriously and will be carefully considered and her questions will be answered to the best of our abilities.

Sincerely,



William R. LaHS
Radiation Protection and Health Effects
Branch
Division of Regulatory Applications
Office of Nuclear Regulatory Research

Enclosures: As stated

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