



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

SEP 9 1983

Mr. Charles L. Elkins
Acting Assistant Administrator
for Air, Noise and Radiation
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Mr. Elkins: *Chuck*

Thank you for the opportunity to examine the most recent version of the "Federal Radiation Guidance on Dose Limits for Persons Exposed to Transuranium Elements in the General Environment," which the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposes to submit to the President for approval. As you note in your letter to me, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) provided concurrence on a similar but somewhat different document in my letter dated July 2, 1981. In the two years since then, however, circumstances have changed, and for the reasons that follow, I believe it is appropriate to defer my concurrence on the proposed guidance.

A significant change that has occurred since our concurrence two years ago involves the increased number of Federal agencies which are actively involved in resolving the issue of establishing residual radioactivity levels in the general environment. Within the NRC, for example, we are engaged in an effort to establish such levels in order to regulate the decommissioning of nuclear power reactors and other licensed nuclear facilities. Additionally, the Department of Energy (DOE) has published radiological guidelines (which appear significantly higher than the proposed EPA transuranium guidelines) for its remedial action program in the cleanup of formerly utilized sites (the FUSRAP program). For its part, EPA has recently expressed concern with cleanup of old radiation facilities (letter G. Sjoblom to R. Minogue, May 3, 1983, copy enclosed). These various activities all involve attempts to develop public health protection measures that hinge upon resolution of the problem of residual radioactivity in soil; the same objective of the proposed Federal Radiation Guidance addressing soil contamination with transuranium elements. To date, these activities have resulted in a relatively wide range of proposed residual limits.

In view of the broader need for uniform and consistent guidance on residual radioactivity levels in soil, including a wide variety of radionuclides and elements other than transuranics, we believe EPA should carefully consider the development of recommendations for Federal Guidance of broader application. This approach is consistent with the suggestions made by Mr. Minogue to Mr. Sjoblom by letter dated June 14, 1983 (copy attached).

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In addition, regarding the subject proposed Federal Guidance on transuranium elements, the NRC staff has identified several significant technical comments (see enclosed letters dated July 19 and 29, 1983 from Dr. William A. Mills, NRC, to Dr. Gordon Burley, EPA) which should be resolved. To expedite resolution of our comments I have asked my staff to work directly and soon with EPA's Office of Radiation Programs staff.

Thank you for considering our comments in your efforts to develop Federal Guidance in this important area.

Sincerely,

(Signed) William J. Dircks
William J. Dircks
Executive Director
for Operations

Enclosures:

1. Ltr to R. Minogue from G. Sjoblom,
dtd 5/3/83
2. Ltr to G. Sjoblom from R. Minogue,
dtd 6/14/83
3. Ltr to G. Burley from W. A. Mills,
dtd 7/19/83
4. Ltr to G. Burley from W. A. Mills,
dtd 7/29/83

cc: S. T. Brewer, DOE