



victoria 9-2273

nuclear corporation of america

isotopes specialties company - division

p.o. box 688
170 west providencia
burbank, california

January 25, 1960

Mr. John A. McCone, Chairman
U. S. Atomic Energy Commission
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Mr. McCone:

Our company is in the commercial disposal of radioactive waste. We have had our license for several years and in that period of time have accumulated a quantity of radioactive waste material. The production of this waste is directly proportional to the utilization of radioisotopes. The more successful we are in promoting the use of radioisotopes, the more waste will be generated. It quite logically follows that the more waste that is generated, due to our success in promoting the program, the greater will be the disposal problem.

Each time that we have evolved a program for the ultimate disposal for this waste we are beset by many many interferences that hold up our actual waste disposal operations. We are in this business in a very solid way, and a workable solution to the problem is necessary for the life of a commercial venture in this field.

I think the huge amount of controversy generated here in Long Beach by the Coastwise Marine Disposal Company points up our situation very sharply. This company complied with the AEC rules and regulations, and yet a tremendous mass of conflict developed. I am sure that none of us in this field can afford to see the waste disposal problem kicked and banded about in this fashion. We must solve this problem in order to use isotopes.

Over the past year I have had several interesting discussions with some of your Commission people regarding the possibility of utilizing existing AEC land areas for dumping sites. It seems to me that some of these areas meet all the conditions we must have for adequate dumping. They are under Government cognizance; they are currently contaminated with radioactivity; they are accessible. It seems to me that based on these principles the details of actual operations are quite incidental and capable of being worked out. Specifically in this area, the Las Vegas site may offer a potential

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dumping and storage ground which would take the pressure off on a relatively short term basis.

I fully realize that this is still not the answer. It will, however, give us a way out in the immediate future as the operations would be subject to Governmental regulation, and not so prone to "footballing" around as it is when one goes through local Governments, etc.

The second great area of our interest is that of processing nuclear waste to produce usable byproducts or more easily disposed of waste. Our company has worked in the commercial field of radioisotope utilization for over 8 years. In that time we have accumulated some knowledge and experience, and perhaps more importantly a philosophy concerning waste disposal. We think that a proposal on our part to the Commission would be in order. This proposal, in essence, would center around the following proposed undertaking:

1. A nationwide survey of the classes and types of waste produced, on hand, and to be produced during the next 5-year period.
2. A refining of this classification to give an analysis of the waste by radioisotope content and chemical composition.
3. A charting of this information in relation to the producing areas of the country in order to produce a geographical picture of the problem.
4. A survey of the possible treatment methods which will produce (a) gross fission products for use as energy emitters; (b) possible separation into refined fission products; (c) concentration of the waste in the smallest gravimetric configuration for practical disposal.

This would be our approach in order to define, analyze, and present a proposal to get at the problem.

I plan to be in Washington on Thursday, February 4. I would very much like to arrange a meeting with the proper Commission people, or yourself, to discuss our own specific interest in securing an interim arrangement to use the Las Vegas site, and consideration of our proposal to undertake work along the lines indicated above.

We fully realize the many problems that beset the AEC in a situation of this kind. It is a complicated mixture of public relations, common sense, technical ability, and economics. All of these make for a very difficult formula indeed. However, we are sure that as in all our relations with the Commission these problems may be solved and will result in continued expansion of the utilization of radioisotopes.

Very truly yours,

A. A. Michaud

A. A. Michaud, Vice President