



MELVIN R. BROWN
SALT LAKE COUNTY

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER
SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH 84114

LEGISLATURE
538-1012
BUSINESS
355-8070
RESIDENCE
255-0556

FAX Transmission

July 22, 1998

Mr. Joseph J. Holonich, Chief
Uranium Recovery Branch
Division of Waste Management
Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Mail Stop T7J9
Washington, DC 20555-0001

Dear Mr. Holonich:

I want to express concerns that have been brought to my attention regarding a decision made by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). The NRC recently issued an amendment to the license of the White Mesa Uranium Mill operated by International Uranium Corporation (IUC) in Blanding, Utah. This amendment would essentially allow White Mesa to become an unlicensed disposal facility for radioactively contaminated soil and debris through the disguise of "sham" recycling or reprocessing.

I have not seen justification for allowing IUC to reprocess this material. Based on the price that IUC is being paid to "recycle" the Ashland 2 waste materials (\$99/yard), and considering how insignificant the value of recovered ore will be even if "recycled" for free (\$5/yard), it is obvious that IUC is merely "handling" the materials in order to unlawfully dispose. It is simple to see from the figures that the material is not being processed primarily for its source material value but for the recycling or disposal fee. The value of disposal is almost 20 times the value of any uranium that might be extracted.

Any company wishing to dispose of nuclear waste must obtain a radioactive materials license for disposal of radioactive waste from either the NRC or the Utah Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and a Groundwater Discharger Permit from the Utah DEQ. The process of licensing was put into place for the protection of the public and environmental health and safety and to ensure proper regulation.

This "sham" recycling was tried before and was found to be unacceptable after the state of Utah objected. At that time, wastes had already been shipped to the White Mesa Mill and had to be shipped back to the place of origin. A thorough review of 10 CFR 2.1205 would be well worth the time and effort to avoid a similar situation.

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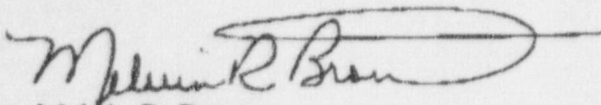
Mr. Joseph Holonich

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Therefore, I request that NRC, pursuant to holding a hearing, reconsider its decision allowing "sham" recycling of radioactive wastes from New York to be disposed in Utah without the proper licensing and permitting for radioactive waste disposal facilities in our state. This back-door approach is unacceptable and leads me to request that the NRC review this matter further and stay the issuance of the license amendment during this review.

Sincerely,



Melvin R. Brown
Speaker

copy: Governor Michael Leavitt
Diann Niclson
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Senator Robert Bennett
Senator Orrin Hatch
Congressman James V. Hansen
Congressman Chris Cannon
Congressman Merrill Cook