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**Subject:** Attention: Rulemaking and Adjudications Staff

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November 24, 1999  
Mr. Richard Meserve, NRC Chairman  
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
Washington, DC 20555  
Attn.: Rulemaking and Adjudications Staff

Dear Chairman Meserve and Staff:

I am writing to comment on the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's intent to approve historically contaminated nuclear and legacy waste for release in recycling. I find this concept unacceptable, based on past mistakes, incompetency, and the growing revelation that rad contamination, at any level, can be hazardous to human health. Murphy's Law- "If something can go wrong, it will"- is especially true in the rad arena.

For background, I am a 51-year old machinist at Oak Ridge's Y-12 Plant, where I have been employed since 1968. I was diagnosed with Chronic Beryllium Disease in 1993, after several years' misdiagnosis as asthma. My symptoms range from mild to quite severe. Since being diagnosed, I have immersed myself in educating myself in the historical blunders of DOE/DOD throughout the 50 years of nuclear development. In the last few years, I have attended several DOE and local health conferences, as an affected employee, and the relationship has resulted in much better communication for both sides. But much more work needs to be done.

I would cite several examples as reasons for my opposition to recycling the contaminated metals. Locally, there are two former salvage yards, the DuPont Smith yard in Oak Ridge, and the David Witherspoon yard in nearby Knoxville. Both acquired salvage materials from Oak Ridge Operations, both were later found to have contaminated equipment.

Last year, a large piece of equipment, I believe a vertical turret lathe, was purchased at auction from ETTP (the former K-25 site), and was found to have internal contamination, despite being "green-tagged" for public release.

About two years ago, barrels of rad waste, destined for out-of-state shipment to a proper disposal site, were found to have been misdirected to Y-12's burial grounds.

The well-publicized destruction of documents at INEEL and other sites (including Y-12) make verification impossible.

The acknowledgement of plutonium at Paducah, the cancer clusters around Brookhaven Lab, and the almost unbelievable contamination releases from

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Hanford solidify the assertion that we haven't done a very good job of containment to date, even at the site level. Heaven help us if we release these materials to the unsuspecting public. This is not the proper approach to population control.

I would call on the NRC to extend its comment period on this action at least a year, as more facts such as these examples are surfacing almost weekly. The workers at these sites are your most valuable resource. I beg you to use them in any final decision.

Regards,

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