

December 1, 1999

Ms. Katie Sweeney, Esq.
National Mining Association
1130 17th Street N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036-4677

SUBJECT: U.S. GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE REPORT ON LOW-LEVEL
RADIOACTIVE WASTE DISPOSAL

Dear Ms. Sweeney:

I am responding to your letter of November 2, 1999, to Commissioner Greta Dicus of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission regarding a recent U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) report, "Low-Level Radioactive Wastes: States Are Not Developing Disposal Facilities." You note that the findings in the report are pertinent to the Commissions' consideration of permitting disposal of non-11e.2 byproduct material in uranium mill tailings impoundments. This matter is before the Commission in two staff papers, SECY-99-012, "Use of Uranium Mill Tailings Impoundments for the Disposal of Waste Other Than 11e.(2) Byproduct Material and Reviews of Applications to Process Material Other Than Natural Ores," and SECY-99-011, "Draft Rulemaking Plan: Domestic Licensing of Uranium and Thorium Recovery Facilities - Proposed New 10 CFR Part 41." Both of these papers address issues raised in your White Paper of April 1998.

We share your concern about the development of safe disposal options for radioactive wastes. We have notified staff for all of the Commissioners that the GAO report is relevant to the disposal issues addressed in the above papers and that you have requested that they consider it in their deliberations.

I trust this reply responds to your request.

Sincerely,

[Original signed by]
Thomas H. Essig, Chief
Uranium Recovery and
Low-Level Waste Branch
Division of Waste Management
Office of Nuclear Material Safety
and Safeguards

Ticket No.: G19990577

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Ms. Katie Sweeney, Esq.
National Mining Association
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Washington, D.C. 20036-4677

SUBJECT: U.S. General Accounting Office Report on Low-Level Radioactive Waste Disposal

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for 1/29/99



**UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION**
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

December 1, 1999

Ms. Katie Sweeney, Esq.
National Mining Association
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I trust this reply responds to your request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Thomas H. Essig", is written over the typed name.

Thomas H. Essig, Chief
Uranium Recovery and
Low-Level Waste Branch
Division of Waste Management
Office of Nuclear Material Safety
and Safeguards

ACTION

EDO Principal Correspondence Control

FROM:

DUE: 12/8/99

EDO CONTROL: G19990577

DOC DT: 11/02/99

FINAL REPLY:

Katie Sweeney
National Mining Association

TO:

Chairman

FOR SIGNATURE OF :

*Ticket closed per letter
to Katie Sweeney from
J. Esig on Dec. 1, 1999*
** GRN **

CRC NO: 99-0935

DESC:

GAO REPORT, "LOW-LEVEL RADIOACTIVE WASTES - STATES
ARE NOT DEVELOPING DISPOSAL FACILITIES"

ROUTING:

Travers
Paperiello
Miraglia
Norris
Blaha
Burns
Lohaus, SP
Corley, OEDO
GAO File

DATE: 11/16/99

ASSIGNED TO:

CONTACT:

NMSS

Kane

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS OR REMARKS:

For Appropriate Action.

Report has been transmitted by note from J. Blaha,
OEDO to the Commissioner Assistants dated 10/5/99.

<u>DWM</u>	<u>Action</u>
Due to NMSS Director's Office	
By	<u>12/3/99</u>
<u>rec'd 11/18/99</u>	

Dwm only has entire
attachment.

ACTION

Date to OED

Date to OED 12-1-99

cc: Green
Holovich
Esig

11/18
72-11-18-99

To: Kane, NMSS
Hae

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
CORRESPONDENCE CONTROL TICKET

PAPER NUMBER: CRC-99-0935 LOGGING DATE: Nov 12 99

ACTION OFFICE: EDO

AUTHOR: KATIE SWEENEY
AFFILIATION: DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

ADDRESSEE: CHAIRMAN DICUS

LETTER DATE: Nov 2 99 FILE CODE: O&M 12 GAO

SUBJECT: ENCLOSED GAO REPORT "LOW-LEVEL RADIOACTIVE WASTES:
STATES ARE NOT DEVELOPING DISPOSAL FAICILITIES"

ACTION: Appropriate

DISTRIBUTION: CHAIRMAN, COMRS, OGC, OCAA, RF

SPECIAL HANDLING: NONE

CONSTITUENT:

NOTES: OCM #5136 --- COPY OF ENCLOSURES TO: EDO, CHAIRMAN,
COMRS, OGC, OCAA

DATE DUE:

SIGNATURE: DATE SIGNED:
AFFILIATION:

EDO --G19990577