

February 14, 2000

MEMORANDUM TO: Commissioner Dicus
Commissioner Diaz
Commissioner McGaffigan
Commissioner Merrifield

FROM: Richard A. Meserve /RA/

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES STUDY OF NATIONAL POLICY ISSUES ON
CONTROL OF SOLID MATERIALS

I propose that we request that the Board on Energy and Environmental Systems (BEES) of the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) conduct a study and provide recommendations on possible alternatives governing the release of slightly contaminated solid materials. I believe that BEES has the necessary expertise to evaluate the national and international implications of different alternatives. Furthermore, I believe that we could obtain a final report within 9 months of the initiation of the study. During this period, NRC staff could continue with the technical basis development necessary to proceed with any alternative.

I note that certain individuals met with Dr. Carl Paperiello on January 24, 2000, to discuss the views of the metals industry on the release of slightly contaminated materials. These representatives indicated that they would support the establishment of a panel of experts to evaluate possible solutions. In addition, I understand that participants at the public meetings held to discuss the issues paper on release of solid materials have suggested that an independent panel be established to study the issue. Thus, an NAS study both could illuminate the issues and perhaps narrow the controversy.

If approved, resources for this initiative should not be funded through NMSS reprogramming, but should be considered as part of FY00 mid-year review.

SECY please track.

cc: EDO
OGC
OCFO
SECY