

October 31, 2002

Mr. Joseph P. Malherek
Policy Analyst
Public Citizen's Critical Mass Energy
and Environment Program
215 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20003-1155

SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO REQUEST FOR EXTENSION OF COMMENT PERIOD ON
LOUISIANA ENERGY SERVICES "WHITE PAPERS"

Dear Mr. Malherek:

Thank you for your letter to the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) dated October 14, 2002. In your letter, you requested the NRC to extend, by an additional 60 days, the 30-day comment period on the six licensing issues presented by Louisiana Energy Services (LES) in a letter to the NRC dated April 24, 2002. NRC held a public meeting with LES on April 30, 2002, to discuss these issues further. Subsequent to that meeting, the NRC received comments on these issues from the United States Enrichment Corporation and the Department of Energy.

On September 9, 2002, LES announced its gas centrifuge enrichment plant site selection as the Hartsville site in Tennessee. Responding to a Nuclear Information and Resource Service (NIRS) request, dated September 11, 2002, we published in the Federal Register a formal, 30-day opportunity to comment on the policy issues. This 30-day comment period was to end on November 1, 2002. On October 14, 2002, Trousdale County sponsored a public information forum in Hartsville. At this forum, members of the public expressed concern that they had only recently become aware of the proposed siting of the plant near Hartsville and didn't have an adequate period of time to provide input on the issues presented by LES. By letter dated October 16, 2002, LES also requested the NRC to extend the comment period. After considering these requests, on October 25, 2002, we published a Federal Register Notice extending the comment period to November 13, 2002. We believe that this extension will provide the public with an adequate period to review the LES policy issues and provide input.

As you are aware, the public will have several other opportunities to formally participate in the LES licensing process. For example, after LES submits its license application and environmental report to the NRC, the public will have an opportunity to petition for a hearing. In addition, the public will have an opportunity to provide information in the NRC's environmental impact statement (EIS) scoping process and to comment on NRC's draft EIS.

We look forward to receiving any comments that you may have on the LES policy issues and hope that you are able to participate in future LES licensing proceedings.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Timothy C. Johnson
Special Projects Section
Special Projects and Inspection Branch
Division of Fuel Cycle Safety
and Safeguards
Office of Nuclear Material Safety
and Safeguards

Docket: 70-3103, 70-7003

cc: William Szymanski/DOE
Rod Krich/Exelon
James Curtiss/W&S
Jerry Clift/Trousdale
Mario Robles/USEC
George Dials/LES
E. Nanney/State of Tennessee
Michael Marrotte/NIRS

J. Malherek

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FCSS Ticket - 2002-039

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