



Fred E. Humes
Director

August 29, 2002

Andrew Persinko
U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D. C. 20555

SUMMARY AND ADDITIONAL COMMENTS – PUBLIC MEETING TO DISCUSS
NRC'S DRAFT SAFETY EVALUATION REPORT – MIXED OXIDE FUEL
FABRICATION FACILITY – NORTH AUGUSTA, SOUTH CAROLINA, AUGUST
27, 2002

Dear Mr. Persinko:

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the subject meeting. We would like to provide the following summary comments for your record:

1. Construction and operation of the MOX facility is the most critical part in our country's initiative to make surplus weapons grade plutonium less accessible and less usable for use by terrorists or in weapons of mass destruction. Because of its significance for long-term national and international security, NRC should expedite review and action of the Duke, COGEMA & Stone and Webster Construction Authorization Request.
2. During the subject meeting (and at other times) it has been suggested that the NRC review include the programmatic basis for the MOX program and that the recent decision to cancel the Plutonium Immobilization Facility. We believe such review is inappropriate, and is not part of the Construction Authorization Request process. The Department of Energy, which has established the nation's surplus plutonium disposition strategy, is responsible for addressing, and defending if necessary, the programmatic basis of the MOX facility. We recommend and encourage NRC to confine its review to matters that assure that the MOX facility can be constructed and operated within established safety and environmental guidelines.
3. During the subject meeting one public participant stated that the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SC-DHEC) has indicated an increased incidence of cancer in Aiken County, one of the counties adjacent to the Savannah River Site (SRS), the location of the proposed MOX facility. We are unaware of any such report or statement by DHEC. We have contacted DHEC who has verified that DHEC has not made any such statement or issued any such report.

In fact, DHEC shows that Aiken County is 41 out of 46 South Carolina counties in the incidence of cancer.

A very comprehensive health study of the public surrounding the SRS was conducted by The Medical University of South Carolina, with collaboration from Emory University (Atlanta, GA). The study established a cancer and birth defects registry for South Carolina and Georgia counties surrounding SRS, counties adjacent to the Savannah River between SRS and the Atlantic coast and the City of Savannah, GA. Some cancers were elevated for some groups, in particular cervical cancer in black females and esophageal cancer in black males. Registry officials have stated there is no indication these cancers are related to SRS operations. The report was issued in the late 1990s.

Please contact either Ernie Chaput (803-648-5402) or me if you have any questions regarding our comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "F. Humes".

Fred E. Humes



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Mr. Andrew Persinko
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D.C. 20555

• Post Office Box 1708 ■ Aiken, S.C. 29802

