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To: Strosnider, NMSS
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AUTHOR: John Heaton

AFFILIATION: NM

ADDRESSEE: Nils Diaz

SUBJECT: National Enrichment Facility, Eunice, New Mexico

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State of New Mexico
House of Representatives
Santa Fe

5815

CHAIRMAN REC'D

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JOHN A. HEATON
Majority Caucus Chairman
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August 24, 2004

Chairman Nils Diaz
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Office of Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20555

Subject: NATIONAL ENRICHMENT FACILITY, EUNICE, NEW MEXICO

Dear Chairman Diaz:

I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed enrichment facility near Eunice, New Mexico. I chair the Radioactive and Hazardous Materials Committee for the New Mexico legislature; this letter, however, expresses my personal opinions. I have been very engaged with the WIPP project for some twenty years, and I am quite familiar with nuclear issues in the state as well as nationally. I know my positions are shared by a large constituency in my district and in the state. For example, we recently held a hearing regarding the Modern Pit Facility here in Carlsbad and more than 200 people turned out to speak at the hearing. There were only four negative presenters.

It was my privilege to visit the prototype facility in the Netherlands and the trip just confirmed what I already knew – this will be a safe facility and it will be good for New Mexico. On that trip I had the opportunity to question the equivalent of the U.S. EPA director, private citizens surrounding the plant, and local politicians. They all confirmed the safe operations of the facility. It is likewise notable that the company had frequent communications with the public and that there was an extremely high level of confidence in the safety of the project.

This facility will help diversify the region's economy, which today relies primarily on energy and extractive industries such as oil, gas, and potash production. The Department of Development of Carlsbad was responsible for bringing the company to southeastern New Mexico in the beginning and we did extensive research related to safety, jobs, and economic impact. The project was widely discussed before civic clubs, the chamber of commerce, the city, and the county. It was strongly endorsed. We know we have a strong work force to support the project and even though it did not come to Carlsbad, we are delighted it will be in our region because of the economic diversity it will bring as well as desperately needed employment.

I understand the annual facility operations will involve approximately 210 employees who will receive an estimated annual pay of \$10 million and an estimated \$3.1 million in annual benefits. In addition, the project will create 400 to 800 short-term jobs for New Mexico construction workers.

Chairman Nils Diaz

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August 24, 2004

As a state representative of the area, I would never overlook the safety of my constituents, my family, and friends for jobs. With safety as the most important issue under consideration, I spent many hours investigating the project, visited a similar site, and met with representatives of LES. I am confident of the safety of the project and even more confident that safety and security will be the primary concern of the company.

I therefore strongly support this project and urge you to give prompt consideration to their application.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "John A. Heaton".

John A. Heaton
State Representative
District 55

cc: The Honorable Bill Richardson
Governor, State of New Mexico

The Honorable Ron Curry
Secretary, Environment Department
State of New Mexico