

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

Dear Chairman Diaz,

The introduction of the National Enrichment Facility to Lea County, New Mexico will make a positive economic impact on the region's current economic base, which today relies primarily on energy and extractive industries such as oil and gas production. This project will create 400 - 800 short term construction jobs and over 200 permanent jobs. The creation of the new jobs will provide an estimated annual pay of \$10 million and also provide opportunities for new housing development, provision of services and education.

This new gas centrifuge uranium enrichment facility will not only be safe and environmentally sound, but will enable the United States to have a domestic source of enriched uranium for the country's commercial nuclear power plants. Nuclear energy supplies approximately 20 percent of U.S. electricity and is the second greatest source of the nation's electricity after coal. The National Enrichment Facility will provide a sustainable domestic supply of low enriched uranium substantially reducing the United States reliance on the global nuclear fuel marketplace.

For these reasons, I whole heartedly support the new enrichment facility to be built in Lea County, New Mexico. The NEF has proven to be a good corporate citizen by contributing to a wide range of organizations for the benefit of the people of southeastern New Mexico.

Sincerely,

Mark Smith

CC: Governor Bill Richardson
Secretary Ron Curry