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November 24, 1992

Administrative Judge
James P. Gleason, Esq.
Presiding Officer
Atomic Safety and Licensing Board Panel
U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D. C. 20555

Dear Judge Gleason:

Pursuant to our telephone conversation last week, enclosed please find information relating to the chemical plume released last Tuesday at the Sequoyah Fuels facility.

By copy of this letter, I am also forwarding the enclosed information to Judge Kline and all counsel.

Sincerely,

Susan L. Uttal
Counsel for NRC Staff

Enclosures: As stated

cc: Judge Kline
Diane Curran, Esq.
Maurice Axelrad, Esq.
James Wilcoxon, Esq.
Brita Cantrell, Esq.

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UNITED STATES NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Office of Governmental and Public Affairs, REGION IV
611 Ryan Plaza Drive, Suite 1000, Arlington, Texas 76011

RIV: 92-83
Contact: Joe Gillingland
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
(Tuesday, November 17, 1992)

NRC STAFF SENDS INSPECTION TEAM TO SEQUOYAH FUELS TO LOOK INTO CHEMICAL RELEASE.

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has sent an Augmented Inspection Team (AIT) to Sequoyah Fuels Corporation's uranium processing plant near Gore, OK, to look into a chemical release that occurred there Tuesday morning (November 17).

The licensee declared a Site Area Emergency at 9:15 a.m. when nitric acid fumes escaped from equipment that was processing refined uranium feed material (yellowcake) and entered the control room at the plant. The release of the nitric acid fumes lasted for approximately 10 minutes, forcing temporary evacuation of the plant. The chemical release formed a plume that was carried over the town of Gore. Preliminary samples taken at Gore and outside the plant were negative. The Site Area Emergency was terminated at 9:53 a.m.

There was no indication that radioactive materials were released offsite during the event and no injuries have been reported at this time.

Operations at the plant were shut down and the licensee has agreed to remain down until it examines the circumstances of the event and consults with the Regional Administrator on restart.

The four-person AIT will begin its inspection Wednesday morning (November 18). A report of the AIT's findings will be made public in about four weeks.

Sequoyah Fuels processes refined uranium ores to produce uranium hexafluoride (UF₆), one step in manufacturing reactor fuel for commercial nuclear power plants.

(EDITORS: This information has also been released by the NRC in Washington, D.C.)

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NOV-17-1992 11:18 FROM SEQUOYAH FUELS CORP.

TO

NRC - REGION IV P.81



SEQUOYAH FUELS
A GENERAL ATOMICS COMPANY

IMMEDIATE PRESS RELEASE

Gore, Ok., Nov. 17, 1992 at 9:15 a.m. a Site Area Emergency was declared at the Sequoyah Facility, located near Gore, Ok. Nitric acid fumes escaped from equipment at the plant. No off-site affects are anticipated. No radioactive materials were released and there were no reported injuries. The Site Area Emergency was terminated at 9:53am.

Air samples were immediately taken at both Gore and Webbers Falls and the results were negative. The plant has been placed on a stand-by status until the investigation has been completed.

Bob Bates, Oklahoma State Health Department, is on site to evaluate the situation. Appropriate agencies, including the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, have been notified.

For additional information, call Pam Bennett, (918)-489-3383.