

SOUTHWESTERN LOW-LEVEL RADIOACTIVE WASTE COMMISSION

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August 31, 2006

To: Chief, Rules and Directive Branch
Mail Stop T6-D59
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington DC 20555-0001

Attn: Ryan Whited

Subject: Comments on the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's
Low-Level Radioactive Waste Program

The Southwestern Low-Level Radioactive Waste Commission sees a need for the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to take actions pertaining to imminent loss of access to the Barnwell, South Carolina disposal facility in 2008.

Of immediate concern is additional regulatory guidance for low-level waste generators, especially small ones, who will be faced with a need to store Classes B and C waste, as well as certain Class A waste, when the Barnwell facility is no longer available. Many such generators are poorly located and equipped to deal with storage and will require specific assistance in safely and effectively storing those wastes until disposal capability is again available.

To provide for disposal capability, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission is urged to take whatever steps are necessary to facilitate a way for the U.S. Department of Energy to accept those "commercial" wastes for which disposal access will no longer be available at Barnwell. The technical aspects are minor, as the incremental increase in the total amount of waste, resulting from the Department of Energy's accepting commercial waste, would be small compared with the waste the Department of Energy itself produces and disposes of in its own facilities. Legislative and regulatory issues must be analyzed and appropriate action initiated.

A separate matter which the Southwestern Low-Level Radioactive Waste Commission urges the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to investigate is a modification of the uniform manifest to provide a place for a code to be entered which would relate to specific approvals granted by Compact Commissions, in order that specific disposals could be more readily related to specific approvals. This would increase the efficacy and accuracy of internal Compact waste tracking.

The Southwestern Low-Level Radioactive Waste Commission thanks the Nuclear Regulatory Commission for the opportunity to comment on the low-level radioactive waste program. Please contact me via the means identified in the letterhead if you have questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Kathy A. Davis'.

Kathy A. Davis, Chair

cc: Southwestern Low-Level Radioactive Waste Commission members

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