



70-734

September 30, 1996
696-2625

VIA EXPRESS MAIL SERVICE

Mr. Charles E. Gaskin
Licensing Section 1 / Licensing Branch
Division of Fuel Cycle Safety
and Safeguards, NMSS
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, DC 20555

Subject: **Docket No. 70-734; SNM-696; Submittal of General Atomics' Site
Decommissioning Plan**

Dear Mr. Gaskin:

Pursuant to 10 CFR 70.38 and our recent discussions on the subject, enclosed is "General Atomics' Site Decommissioning Plan" dated September 1996.

It is to be noted that GA's SNM-696 licensed principal activities were conducted in several different buildings, areas, or portions thereof on GA's site. With the exception of GA's TRIGA fuel fabrication operation, which was conducted in Building 22, the other buildings, areas, or portions thereof, where SNM was used are also locations where activities involving the use of radioactive materials licensed by the State of California were, are being, and may continue to be, conducted. Therefore, the cessation of NRC licensed principal activities does not, by itself, necessarily mean that the locations where those activities were conducted need, or should be, decommissioned at this time. Rather, GA believes the appropriate action for many facilities and/or portions of GA's site would be to remove the SNM inventory, demonstrate that criticality safety is not an issue, and transfer the facility/site to the exclusive jurisdiction of GA's State of California radioactive material license.

Examples of activities that are being conducted at GA facilities that involve the use of State of California licensed radioactive material include: the continuing DOE supported magnetic confinement fusion energy R&D program, a DOE supported inertial confinement fusion R&D project, radiation detection and monitoring equipment design, manufacturing and calibration, and bioscience research.

With regard to the schedule for completion of decommissioning and/or transfer of jurisdiction exclusively to GA's State of California radioactive materials license, it is obvious from the scope and complexity of the effort required that it is not practicable that it be completed in 24 months. It simply is not technically feasible; GA's Hot Cell decommissioning effort itself is anticipated to take about another 3 years to complete. However, GA is committed to complete the decommissioning and/or transfer of jurisdiction to the State of California on a schedule as timely as technically feasible taking into consideration the availability of resources and the necessary involvement and interaction of various government agencies.

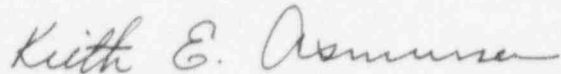
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Under separate cover, GA is also submitting the enclosed plan to the State of California Department of Health Services' Radiologic Health Branch.

If you have any questions regarding the above, please don't hesitate to contact me at (619) 455-2823.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Keith E. Asmussen".

Dr. Keith E. Asmussen, Director
Licensing, Safety and Nuclear Compliance

Enclosure: Plan titled "GENERAL ATOMICS' SITE DECOMMISSIONING PLAN," dated September 1996

cc: Mr. Frank A. Wenslawski, NRC Region IV / WCFO (1 copy of enclosure)