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(57 FR 48749)

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January 23, 1993

Secretary of the Commission
Docketing and Service Branch
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D.C. 20555

Reference: Federal Register, Vol 57, No. 200
Wed, October 28, 1992 Proposed Rules

Also: U.S. Regulatory Commission rules and Regulations
Code of Federal Regulations-Energy, Title 10
Chapter 1, Part 40

Dear Sirs:

Reference a letter to the Commission dated January 15, 1993, from Sandra L. Carroiro. I concur with the same and want to add some additional comments of my own on the subject of thoriated tungsten.

I have information from the insurance companies that the majority of welders die from some type of upper respiratory disease. I know personally of two welders that have lost their thorax. These welders spent the most of their career tig welding with thoriated tungsten. This raised the question in my mind as to how many more welders have this condition as a result of exposure to this tungsten. Many of the welders I have talked to have no idea as to the radioactivity of the electrodes or that using an electrode to sharpen knives resulted in contamination of the food they or their families ate. Thorium, I have found out, goes directly to the bones, especially in children after it has entered the bloodstream.

I have seen welders actually put the thoriated tungsten in their mouths and hold them there while they are sharpening the electrodes. These and other misuses of the tungsten raises the serious health cost question that the President and others are so concerned about.

I also question the amount of information that has been made available to the public about the hazards of this thorium. People that have thoriated tungsten in their homes that was given to them by a welder. I wonder what sort of statistics concerning bone disease a study of welders and their children would produce, and what percentage of these welders' career centered around tig welding.

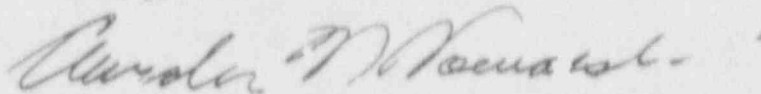
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Although it is written in the ANSI and AWS regulations, the majority of welders have never really read them, or even comprehend the dangers of thoriated tungsten. The alternative is available, and we no longer have the need to subject our citizens to this thorium dioxide.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Alexander M. Nowalski".

Alexander M. Nowalski
ETC, USN, Retired