


DEC 10 1996

Note to: Docket Number 070-3020
From: John R. Cook 
Subject: Virginia segment of NAC route approval

NAC has requested a route approval for the shipment of research reactor spent fuel from McMaster University (Ontario, Canada) to the DOE plant at Savannah River. SFPO subsequently requested Region II to survey the West Virginia and Virginia (VA) segments of the route. VA Routing in this area would normally use Interstate-77 (I-77), however, this shipment is overweight, and exceeds the weight restriction for an overpass located on I-77. The proposed alternate route used U.S. Route 460 (US-460), Virginia Route 100 (VA-100), and U.S. Route 11 (US-11), to connect to Interstate-81 (I-81), that rejoins I-77. In accordance with U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) regulations regarding highway routing for spent fuel, the VA Department of Transportation (VADOT) designated VA-100 for spent fuel shipments in this area on March 11, 1994.

The Region-II route survey identified an issue with regard to the use of VA-100 and US-11. The Region noted that portions of these routes were only two-lanes wide (without guardrails), and traversed hilly terrain. The Region recommended that the shipment continue on US-460 (a divided highway) to reach I-81. The Route-460-only alternate, however, is a longer route (vehicular accident probabilities increase with mileage driven), and traverses the populated municipal areas of Blacksburg and Christiansburg, Virginia.

I contacted Blake Williams, NAC, and suggested he contact VADOT about using US-460 in lieu of VA-100 and US-11, and he complied. He reported that VADOT was not in favor of the US-460-only alternate, due to concern over routing through populated areas.

VADOT reported that there are no sharp turns or steep grades on VA-100, and that VADOT maintains a road maintenance vehicle dispatch facility on VA-100. VADOT did agree to eliminate the U.S. Route 11 segment (the shipment will remain on VA-100 to I-81, a change that will shorten the route).

Per telephone conversation on December 9, 1996, Region II was advised by SFPO that DOT regulates routing safety, that DOT regulations authorize states to designate preferred routes for spent fuel shipments, and of the VADOT decision on this route. The final route approval will stipulate the use of US-460 and VA-100.

cc: Charles Haughney, SFPO
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