

CLAIBORNE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BOARD

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May 21, 1997

Chairman Shirley Jackson
U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington D.C. 20555

Dear Chairman Jackson:

Claiborne Parish, Louisiana, is in danger of losing a proposed \$855 million uranium enrichment plant which would bring our parish decades of large sums of money in construction payrolls, then permanent jobs with above-average operating payrolls, much needed increased income for taxing bodies, and a greatly improved economy in a financially depressed parish.

Louisiana Energy Services (LES), a consortium of highly competent companies proposing this plant, has spent \$33 million over the past eight years in research, planning and the extensive application processes, both federal and state, required to secure licenses to build and operate the plant. Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund stepped in to ally itself with a relative handful of local area persons opposed to the plant, fighting the proposal every step of the way. Despite this opposition, LES passed all the requirements. Most importantly, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission found that the proposed plant would be safe.

Now, opponents have played their final card. Because the site selected for the proposed plant happened to be between two black communities, the opponents entered a plea that "environmental racism" was practiced in selecting the plant site. This is NOT a fact, but the NRC's Atomic Safety and Licensing Board used it as the basis for rejecting LES's proposal, thus apparently killing the project. LES has appealed that ruling.

When Claiborne Parish was selected as general location for this plant, members of Claiborne Parish Industrial Development Foundation (name now changed to Claiborne Economic Development Board) became active in seeking possible sites in the parish which perhaps would meet the consortium's criteria regarding physical suitability of the land, acreage available, cost, and accessibility to transportation. A considerable amount of study on suitability of sites resulted in the present site being selected. Racism had nothing whatsoever to do with the choice.

The Atomic Safety and Licensing Board followed the "politically correct" path rather than the factual path in the decision to reject LES's application, thus wasting millions of dollars as well as denying a depressed parish the opportunity to enhance its financial situation greatly.

The Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund has revealed its self-seeking interest in this matter in a recent advertising mailing received by some in Claiborne Parish Monday, May 19, seeking financial contributions. A paragraph in the form letter said the uranium enrichment plant "would have greatly jeopardized subsistence gardening, fishing and hunting by emitting toxic radioactive pollutants into the air and local watershed." This is NOT true -- the NRC itself found that the plant would be safe -- but it is being used to appeal for money.

WE PLEAD WITH YOU to use your considerable influence to intervene in any manner proper and possible to see that LES's appeal is approved and that appropriate licensing follows promptly. The loss to Claiborne Parish and all of Louisiana will be tremendous if this proposal fails due to "politically correct" thinking in response to a last-ditch, desperation effort by opponents of nuclear energy.

If you desire any additional information or verification, please let us know. Time is of the essence if this highly important project is to be saved. Thank you for your attention to this.

Sincerely,



J. T. Taylor
President