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Director of Regulation

KERR-McGEE SEQUOYAH PLANT

With reference to Chairman Seaborg's planned attendance at the dedication of the Kerr-McGee Sequoyah Plant, the following summarizes the licensing situation with respect to that plant and other related aspects of deep-well disposal.

Kerr-McGee applied for a source material license in September 1969, to authorize the conversion of uranium concentrates (yellowcake) to UF_6 . The application also requested approval to dispose of liquid waste by deep well injection. A license was issued in February 1970, for operation of the plant but did not include approval of deep-well disposal of the liquid waste.

A review of the initial information submitted by Kerr-McGee regarding deep-well disposal was made by the USGS and Dr. Warner, our staff consultant of deep-well disposal. They indicated that a comprehensive safety assessment of the well system was necessary. The additional information was requested of Kerr-McGee by letter in February 1970, and a meeting was held with Kerr-McGee to discuss the contents of the letter. Their reply is expected next week.

Approval of the deep-well disposal method is important to Kerr-McGee because the chemical content of the waste exceeds state restrictions for release to surface streams. As an interim measure, Kerr-McGee is holding up the liquid waste in evaporation ponds. Additional pond capacity will be necessary as the plant approaches the planned operating capacity of 5,000 tons of uranium per year. By segregation of the waste stream, it is possible to achieve radioactivity concentrations less than one-tenth of the Part 20 limits for use to unrestricted areas for 90% of the waste volume. Disposal of this material by deep well would greatly relieve the situation. Enclosed is a summary of the liquid waste characteristics at Sequoyah Plant.

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