



The Louisiana and North West Railroad Company

"Since 1888"

210 West Main Street

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June 16, 1997

Dr. Shirley Jackson
Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, DC 20555

Dr. Jackson:

In reference to the NRC's ruling to prohibit construction of Louisiana Energy Services' proposed Uranium Enrichment Facility in Claiborne Parish, near Homer, LA, due to environmental racism.

Environmental racism is the least substantial and most asinine of all excuses thus offered to prohibit licensing of this facility. Prior to the acquisition of the current site, LES voiced its desire to purchase land west of Homer. Unfortunately, the owner insisted that LES purchase his entire acreage (around one thousand acres) rather than the 300 acres needed. As a result, LES pursued its second choice and acquired the current site east of Homer. Upon realizing his loss and although too late, the western property owner then advised LES he would negotiate. With this knowledge, how can any one suspect, much less declare, the selection process was racially motivated?

Secondly, such an accusation is a direct insult to those, both black and white, who have endeavored to bring jobs to Claiborne Parish. In fact, many in favor of this facility support its construction solely due to the fact that it will employ a number of minorities. Furthermore, the area has been declared an "enterprise zone". The NRC surely understands that such designation is an economic affirmative action program and is the furthestmost thing from environmental racism.

The NRC's ruling signifies an obvious lack of research into the accusation of environmental racism. As is often the case, a few loud and pompous voices have caused an extremely unfortunate and erroneous decision to be rendered. I, personally, have heard the plant referred to by some CANT members, media reporters, and self-appointed experts, as a "nuclear weapons facility", a "nuclear reactor", and "the next Chernobyl". Such rhetoric is unfortunate since it is being utilized to frighten minorities, the uninformed, and the elderly. It is a recklessly poor means of gaining a selfish goal. In my opinion, those using such tactics are guilty of, not only unethical behavior, but racism as well.

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I, along with many others, urge you to reconsider and approve licensing of the proposed uranium enrichment facility as soon as possible. Please allow Claiborne Parish the opportunity to take advantage of a situation which will better our standard of living.

Yours very truly,

Galen White

cc: Mr. Blake Hemphill
Louisiana Energy Services
518 East Main Street
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