



CHEM-NUCLEAR SYSTEMS INC.

P.O. Box 1866 • Bellevue, Washington 98009 • (206) 827-0711

July 21, 1978

Dr. Joseph M. Hendrie, Chairman
Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D. C. 20555

Dear Dr. Hendrie:

While in Washington, D. C., this week, I was handed a copy of your letter to The Honorable John Dingell, dated July 7, in which you introduce the subject for consideration to open the DOE burial sites for the receipt of commercial low-level radioactive waste. In your letter, you point out that you have also sent a letter to Dr. Schlesinger requesting the DOE to develop such a contingency plan and to initiate discussions between the NRC and the DOE for this purpose.

On several occasions, in talking with members of your staff, we have been led to believe that the NRC was not going to initiate a move to enter the commercial low-level radioactive waste business. Your letter to Congressman Dingell would appear to be saying exactly the opposite, that indeed you are now taking the initiative to have the DOE enter the commercial business of handling and disposing of low-level radioactive waste.

May I strongly urge that you invite members of the industry, which would, of course, include members from Chem-Nuclear Systems, Inc., to a series of meetings where we would have the opportunity of answering some of the points you raise in your letter about capacity and capability to handle the waste. During such meetings, we would hope that a plan for the orderly development of commercially operated low-level radioactive waste disposal sites could be developed and what constructive support we could expect from the NRC.

The suggestion that the DOE open their sites without going through proper application, Environmental Impact studies, public hearings and a review of the DOE practices to date would seem to be contrary to all of the studies and reports on the development of criteria and standards that are now in the process of being developed.

The main thrust of my letter is a serious request to you that we be given the courtesy to meet with you before any precipitous action is taken. Such a meeting could be constructive in clearing the air as to what your real intentions are for the future of commercial operation of low-level radioactive waste disposal sites. We are of the strong

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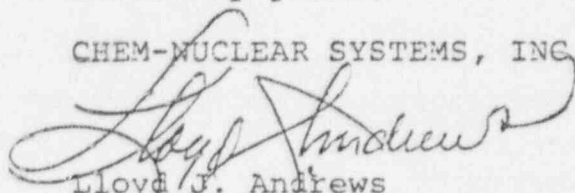
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opinion that this is a time in which the people of the United States are not pushing for more Federal takeover. We would like to see government play its true role of regulator, rather than becoming both operator and regulator.

Your letter did raise several significant issues that, in our judgment, should be addressed in proper scope and detail so that you will have our comments on the record. We will prepare such a letter, which will follow; however, such a letter containing our comments should in no way be misconstrued as a substitute for a serious dialogue between our industry and you and your people on this most critical issue.

Sincerely yours,

CHEM-NUCLEAR SYSTEMS, INC.



Lloyd J. Andrews
Executive Vice President

cc: Senator Warren G. Magnuson
Senator Henry M. Jackson
Congressman John Dingell
Congressman Mike McCormack
Congressman Manuel Lujan
Dr. John M. Deutch
Bruce W. Johnson
John L. West