

February 29, 2000

The Honorable Max Cleland
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Cleland:

I am responding to your letter forwarding the concerns of one of your constituents, Ms. Marjorie C. Ashmore, on issues regarding control of releases of solid materials from licensed facilities.

At this time, the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is in the preliminary stages of examining its approach for controlling solid material and has not made any decisions about the content of any standard that might be issued. The NRC is seeking public input to its decision-making process through various forums. An initial step in that process was to prepare, for public comment, a paper that discusses issues associated with alternative courses of action. This "Issues Paper" was published in a Federal Register notice (FRN) on June 30, 1999 (64 FR 35090), with a comment period that was originally scheduled to close on November 15, 1999, but which was extended to December 22, 1999. To provide further opportunity for public input, the NRC held a series of public meetings during the Fall of 1999 at four locations, as announced in the FRN. Information about current NRC efforts in this area, including the contents of the Issues Paper, opportunities for further public comment, and summaries of comments at the public meetings held to date, is available on NRC's website address at: <http://www.nrc.gov/NMSS/IMNS/controlsolids.html>. The NRC website can be accessed using internet services on computers at home or available at local schools or libraries.

The next step in our process of examining our approach is an NRC staff briefing of the Commission, in May 2000, on public concerns expressed both during the public meetings and in written comments, and on recommendations for proceeding. The Commission will review information presented at the briefing before arriving at a preferred course of action. The Commission briefing will be open to the public.

Please be assured that we will consider your comments, along with those of others that are received, as part of the NRC's decision-making process.

Thank you for your interest in this matter.

Sincerely,

/RA by Carl J. Paperiello, Acting For/

William D. Travers
Executive Director
for Operations

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Executive Director
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