

April 18, 2000

The Honorable Bob Barr
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Barr:

I am responding to your letter forwarding the concerns of one of your constituents, Ms. Marjorie 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. 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.

On March 8, 2000, the Commission directed the NRC staff to request the National Academy of Sciences to conduct a study and provide recommendations on possible alternatives for control of solid materials. Currently, the Commission has under its review a paper prepared by the NRC staff that summarizes the public's concerns, expressed both during the public meetings and in written comments, and provides the staff's recommendations on how to proceed regarding control of solid materials at licensed facilities. The Commission is anticipating holding two separate meetings, open to the public, in May 2000. At the first meeting, on May 3rd, the staff will brief the Commission on the paper, and at the second meeting, on May 9th, representatives of various stakeholder groups will be provided with an opportunity to express their comments and concerns to the Commission. The staff paper and further details about the meetings are on the NRC website noted above.

The Honorable Bob Barr

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

I trust that this reply responds to your concerns.

Sincerely,

/RA/ by Frank Miraglia Acting For/

William D. Travers
Executive Director
for Operations

The Honorable Bob Barr

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William D. Travers
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