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From: "Dimsha, Mark" <Mark.Dimsha@WestonSolutions.com>
To: <LES_EIS@nrc.gov>
Date: 2/25/04 12:02PM
Subject: Discussion Topics for March 4 Public Scoping Meeting

Good morning,

I hope to attend the public scoping meeting on March 4, 2004, in Eunice, New Mexico. As a long-time resident of the area, I have a deep-rooted concern for the area and the residents of Lea County. As such, I have specific issues I hoped are addressed at the meeting. Most important among these concerns are water resources and waste management.

Lea County industries have long overused and/or mismanaged their water resources. To this end, I have the following questions concerning the planned LES Uranium Enrichment Facility (the Facility):

* What are the water demands for operation of the Facility? What are normal and expanded operation water requirements?
* Will LES require new water wells? If so, how many are expected? How will this drawdown affect other wells, including domestic drinking water wells?
* How will LES treat wastewater produced by the Facility? Will the Facility add to the load of municipal wastewater treated in Eunice and surrounding towns? How will hazardous wastewater be treated/secluded?
* Will radioactive liquids be produced? How will these be treated?
* What will be done with treated wastewater effluents?

Natural uranium is composed of 0.07% U-235. Enrichment will produce much waste volumes much larger than the enriched product. It is my understanding that LES plans on storing wastes as hexafluoride gases. This material is very caustic, presenting a very serious chemical hazard in addition to any radiological hazard.

* How does LES plan on storing these wastes at the Facility?
* Currently, there is only one deconversion facility in the United States. Other facilities in the U.S. hold thousands of tons of UF6 wastes that currently are on the backlog for deconversion. Considering this, wastes produced at the Facility would not be treated for at least 10 years. By that time, how much waste product would be produced by the Facility? How much space would this much waste require?
* What testing has been performed on the storage casks used in UF6 storage? In the U.S. how many of these casks have leaked/failed? What are the emergency plans for cask failure?
* Does Lea County have the resources to respond to large-scale release of such caustic material.

These are just a few of my concerns related to the proposed facility. As an environmental professional, I have experience with NEPA in the DOE and NRC realms, and have much experience in environmental work concerning water resource, waste management, and radiation protection. It is possible for that planned facility can meet growing needs for nuclear fuel. In doing so, LES needs to inform the public honestly and openly. Withholding information in the past has hurt the company both in Louisiana and Tennessee. Such actions by LES created mistrust with the public and led to their downfall in their previous encounters. Judging from their past history, LES will not disclose information on their own. It is up to Lea County and the surrounding communities in southeastern New Mexico and west Texas to request this information and keep them honest.

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