

General Electric permit which I would like to read to you and would like your comment.

It says:

The Atomic Energy Commission this week granted to General Electric a provisional permit to construct an irradiated nuclear reactor fuel reprocessing plant in Grundy County, Illinois, adjacent to the three Dresden nuclear power stations of Commonwealth Edison Company. One condition attached to the construction permit was that General Electric show proof that the land on which nuclear waste, created in the plant operation, will be stored has been transferred to the State of Illinois, which will exercise permanent control.

The plant, to be known as the Midwest Fuel Recovery Plant, will have a capacity for processing compacted uranium dioxide at an annual rate of 300 metric tons of uranium. It is designed to recover plutonium, neptunium and uranium from fuels which have been used in nuclear power plants.

Highly radioactive wastes which will be produced are to be reduced to solids, canned and placed in storage basins below ground level and under cooling water. Gaseous effluents from the plant operation which will be released into the atmosphere will be kept within safe levels, AEC said. In addition, AEC says the plant is so designed that the gases will be trapped inside the structure in case of uncontrolled release due to an accident of some sort.

In view of everything that we have said, we get the feeling that there is a certain amount of instability, it is more than just storing of this if you have to store it under cooling water.

Dr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. Chairman, we did not go into all the process details. We mentioned solidification and storage in salt.

Mr. DADDARIO. I understand that. I just add one further point. If you would like to just answer this for the record, you may.

Dr. LIEBERMAN. Fine. What you read there is, I believe, consistent with our approach and the comments that I have made this morning. The wastes are stored in water for an interim period because of the heat involved from the radioactive decay. It is being stored in a way that later the General Electric Co. would be able to remove it and transport it to a salt mine if that was going to be its permanent disposal place.

Mr. DADDARIO. It is not inconsistent with what you have said.

Dr. LIEBERMAN. That is correct.

Mr. DADDARIO. During this period of time there is the need for much closer surveillance than after 30 years.

Dr. LIEBERMAN. Yes.

Dr. TAPE. The point of the State control of land, for example, is indicative of public authority that has long-term cognizance of the land on which this is to be placed and you do not have to worry about a question of a private company that might move out, and so on. It is a question of looking at the permanent commitments.

Mr. DADDARIO. Once this is transferred to the State, such as Illinois, how do you stay on top of it for this period? Who checks and gives advice? What controls do you have?

Dr. TAPE. This depends on the particular State, Mr. Daddario. One of the features of the Atomic Energy Act is recognition that public health and safety matters have long been under the cognizance of the States. The Atomic Energy Act authorizes the Commission to transfer to a State certain of the Commission's regulatory authority over radioactive materials when the Governor certifies that the State has a regulatory program which is adequate to protect health and safety, and the Commission makes a finding that the State's program is adequate