



UNITED STATES
ENERGY RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION
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JUL 8 1977

Dr. James L. Liverman
Assistant Administrator
for Environment & Safety
U. S. Energy Research and
Development Administration
Washington, D. C. 20545

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Dear Jim,

By now you have probably received from Bill Burr a copy of the enclosed statement regarding the Enewetak cleanup drawn up by some of the attendees at last week's Marshall Islands Workshop. Although the statement is unsigned, I understand that it had considerable support from the workshop attendees and I believe it merits your early personal attention.

At issue is the so-called "soil cleanup" of the northern islets of Enewetak Atoll - an heroic effort, at high dollar and environmental cost, which will neither reduce the inventory of Plutonium in the Enewetak ecosystem nor, indeed, significantly modify its availability to man.

Because this soil cleanup effort was devised based in part upon ERDA (AEC) guidance, and because ERDA is committed to provide technical advice and support in its execution, I believe we have no choice but to subject it to continuous critical review. On several occasions in recent years, members of my staff have voiced objections - especially to the disposal plan - to be told that "rocking the boat at this time" could place the entire cleanup project in jeopardy.

Today, however, mobilization and deployment are underway. Included in this mobilization are professional members of my staff who are placed in the position of advising upon and participating in an activity



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which they consider technically unsupportable, economically unsound and environmentally counterproductive.

Unless you have a personal conviction that the currently planned soil removal and disposal effort is the right thing to do, I urge you to direct or arrange that it be immediately reviewed. NV stands ready to assist you in that review in any way you request.

Sincerely,



Mahlon E. Gates
Manager

Enclosure:
Untitled Statement

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