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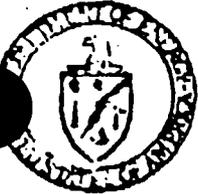
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**RESPONSE TO SPECIFIC REQUEST DURING HEARING BEFORE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ENERGY RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT**

07/22/87

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LETTER

METZENBAUM



Department of Energy
Washington, DC 20686

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July 22, 1987

Honorable Howard M. Metzenbaum
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Metzenbaum:

This letter responds to your specific request expressed during the July 17, 1987, hearing before the Subcommittee on Energy Research and Development for information on the Department of Energy's plans for final disposition of the K-65 silo residues at the Feed Materials Production Center (FMPC) at Fernald, Ohio. The enclosure contains the information you requested and was provided to your staff on Tuesday, July 21, 1987.

The Department is committed to protecting the public and the workers at the Fernald Site. We look forward to working with you on the continued overall improvement of conditions at the site and during future remedial actions.

As explained in the enclosed response, interim improvements as well as long-term remedial actions are being addressed pursuant to the Federal Facilities Compliance Agreement with the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Region V. All actions involving the K-65 silos require EPA review and approval prior to implementation. We are currently exploring the possibility of addressing the K-65 silos as a separate unit within the site-wide remedial process so that alternatives for further remediation may be considered by EPA at an earlier date.

Sincerely,

Mary L. Walker
Assistant Secretary for
Environment, Safety, and Health

Enclosure

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K-65 Silos Remedial Activities

The K-65 silos have been used for storage of approximately 7,200 cubic yards of high specific activity, low-level radium bearing residues, which resulted from the uranium processing conducted at the Feed Materials Production Center (FMPC) and the Weldon Springs (Missouri) site from 1953 through 1955. Necessary maintenance improvements have been made on the silos during their use for storage purposes. In 1964, an earthen embankment was placed around the two silos to provide protective support. In 1979, all tank openings were sealed to provide total enclosure. The earthen embankment was further enlarged in 1983 to alleviate soil erosion. Protective covers consisting of prefabricated wood and metal structures were placed over the domes in 1986 following identification of cracks in the center of the domes.

Based on available information, the Department of Energy believes the K-65 silos do not present an immediate endangerment to FMPC workers or to the surrounding community. However, the Department is committed to improving the existing conditions of the silos in order to ensure that potential risks are minimized while plans for long term disposition are developed and implemented. In this regard, we are continuing to undertake interim corrective action. These actions must be approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) since the K-65 silos are included in the Federal Facilities Compliance Agreement (FFCA) between DOE and EPA, Region V, which was signed in July 1986. For those activities which require an Ohio state permit, DOE secures the necessary state review and approval.

We believe the following interim actions will provide for safe storage of these materials while long term actions are being evaluated and implemented. The short-term actions are:

- A pressure/temperature monitoring system has been installed and is collecting data. This data will be used in developing remedial actions.
- A radon monitoring program at the site boundary and offsite environment has been implemented.
- A security fence and a closed-circuit TV monitoring system has been installed around the silo areas. Access to the K-65 silo area has also been restricted.

-- A plan has been developed to fill the void space between the material in the silos and the dome with a polyurethane foam. Currently, this plan is undergoing technical review prior to submission to the EPA. It is anticipated that the foam material will absorb the the radon gas and also provide structural support for the domes. If approved by EPA and Ohio EPA, the foam will be installed by the Fall of 1987. Following installation of the foam, the domes would be sealed. The installation of the sealant is temperature dependent, and the earliest practicable schedule indicates a Spring 1988 completion.

-- The DOE will analyze the material in the silos as part of the Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study (RI/FS) conducted under the FFCA to further define its physical and chemical characteristics. Sampling will be initiated following sealing of the dome structures.

Long-term actions on K-65 silos will be evaluated under the site-wide RI/FS pursuant to Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) guidelines, which is required by the FFCA. The expected completion date for RI/FS is mid-1990. However, we are currently exploring the possibility of addressing the K-65 silos as a separate unit within the site-wide remedial process. This could enable EPA to approve remediation of the silos prior to completion of all of the studies necessary for selection of site-wide remedial actions.