

Denton said the NRC staff has analyzed the impact on the environment of routine operation of a floating nuclear plant. According to Denton, "the concentrations and quantities of radioactive material normally released to the environment from a floating nuclear plant during its operation are basically the same as those from a land-based plant," and "the concentration of the radionuclides released to the environment will be a small fraction of the maximum permissible concentration limits."

In addition, Denton said, a floating plant has "several potential advantages" over land-based plants, "including a decoupling from earthquake motions, the abundance of cooling water, and the relative isolation from populated areas."

NRC, Denton said, will require that a floating plant be designed so that vital plant areas will not be flooded during an assumed sinking even when high water levels are caused by storm surges. Design will prevent the plants from being grounded on the ocean bottom, and the plants will be able to remain in a safe condition in the event of a tornado with wind speeds of up to 360 miles per hour, Denton said.

Asked why there is no requirement for a single prototype, rather than NRC's plan to license eight plants, Denton said there is "no need," because the NRC staff had gotten sufficient expertise on floating reactors with the nuclear freighter *Savannah*.

Congressman Andrew Maguire (D-NJ) asked if there is any way a core meltdown could be contained, and Denton said "the commission has never found one." In a floating plant, Denton said, less concrete would surround the core to delay penetration by a meltdown. "So we'd have a weaker facility rather than a stronger one, even though the potential danger would be greater," Maguire replied.

Ocean Disposal of Low-level Wastes

EPA "strongly advocates" a policy of environmental isolation and containment of low-level radioactive wastes as opposed to the dilution and dispersion policies practiced by some counties in ocean waste disposal. Rowe told the subcommittee July 26.

The U.S. has not disposed of radioactive wastes in the oceans since 1970, Rowe said, and presently it has no position on whether ocean dumping is an acceptable alternative to land disposal of the wastes because of many "unanswered" questions.

With greater knowledge and proper containment, however, Rowe said, ocean disposal of low-level wastes may be possible in the future. EPA envisions a containment system on or in the ocean bottom rather than in dry land, he said, with the same rules for wastes isolation applying in the ocean as apply on land.

In response to a question from Congressman George Miller (D-Calif), Rowe said that although the agency does not consider ocean disposal of low-level wastes a better alternative than land disposal, problems encountered in burying wastes in shallow trenches have shown that ocean disposal has "less impact" on the environment than does shallow land burial.

EPA Program

The Marine Protection, Research, and Sanctuaries Act of 1972 (Environment Reporter — Federal Laws 71:6001) prohibits ocean disposal of high-level radioactive wastes, radiological warfare agents, and chemical and biological warfare agents, and requires EPA to administer a permit program to regulate ocean disposal of any material not specifically banned by the law.

Since the enactment of the 1972 law, Rowe said, EPA has issued no permits for disposal of radioactive wastes. The Office of Radiation Programs is conducting deepwater surveys

of currently unused U.S. radioactive waste disposal sites in the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans to determine the fate of radionuclides from past disposal sites, he said (Current Developments, June 1, p. 230). In addition, EPA recently proposed revisions to its regulations and criteria for ocean dumping (July 2, p. 409).

According to Rowe, procedures for obtaining a special permit for ocean disposal of low-level wastes currently lack specific regulations for packaging requirements, site-selection criteria, monitoring requirements, a definition of exempt quantities below which no permit would be required, and a more exact definition of high-level radioactive wastes above which no permit would be issued. Rowe said the agency expects to promulgate final permit criteria and regulations in fiscal 1979.

Rowe said that agency research on the effects of low-level waste ocean disposal has been restricted by the program's formal budget authorization of \$165,000, which is increased to about \$250,000 by contributions from other EPA programs. Seiberling commented that total funds for the research program are only about one ten-thousandth the amount authorized by the Federal Government for nuclear research and development.

Enforcement

FLORIDA WRECKING FIRM FINED \$25,000 FOR VIOLATION OF EPA ASBESTOS RULES

A Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., wrecking firm was fined \$25,000 in the first sentencing for violation of Environmental Protection Agency asbestos rules.

District Judge Frederick J.R. Heebe of the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Louisiana fined the firm, fined one of its foremen \$1,000, and placed both on five-years probation for violating the regulations which require wetting of asbestos building materials and their remove in dust-tight containers prior to general demolition. The case stems from the 1974 destruction of the Old Hotel Dieu Hospital in New Orleans.

Region IV Enforcement

EPA Region IV (Atlanta) reported that in June enforcement actions taken included 39 plant visits in Alabama, 283 notices of violation, 17 show-cause orders and 17 administrative orders, and two cases referred to civil court. In Florida, 141 plant visits were made, 331 notices of violation sent, four show cause orders and 10 administrative orders sent, and two cases referred to civil court.

In Georgia, 10 plant visits were made, 46 notices of violation sent, one show cause order and nine administrative orders issued, and two cases referred to civil court. In Kentucky, 42 plant visits were made, 144 notices of violation sent, 12 show cause orders and 15 administrative orders issued, and two cases referred to civil court.

In Mississippi, 34 plant visits were made, five notices of violation sent, and five administrative orders issued. In North Carolina, 71 plant visits were made, 223 notices of violation sent, 38 show cause orders and 29 administrative orders issued and five cases referred to civil court.

In South Carolina, 74 plant visits were made, 181 notices of violation sent, 23 show cause orders and 18 administrative orders issued, and seven cases referred to civil court. In Tennessee, 81 plant visits were made, 147 notices of violation sent, 35 show cause orders and 36 administrative orders issued, and 13 cases referred to civil court.

PLAINTIFF'S
EXHIBIT
43995.00

PLAINTIFF'S
EXHIBIT
WV-008413