

Concerned Scientists criticize nuke plant

The Union of Concerned Scientists is upset over U.S. plans to build a plutonium processing plant without consulting the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The organization specifically is critical of the Energy Department for designing the \$5 billion South Carolina facility that will turn plutonium into fuel for U.S. nuclear reactors without making the plans available for inspection by the IAEA.

Edwin Lyman, senior staff scientist in UCS's Global Security Program, said the move undermines the credibility of nuclear non-proliferation efforts at a time when the international community is struggling to stop the spread of nuclear weapons materials and technologies around the world.

In a letter to Energy Secretary Samuel Bodman, Lyman said the United States has a responsibility to "set the gold standard for safeguards and security" as an example for the rest of the world.

Lyman said an IAEA review of the plant design would provide assurances to the international community that the facility will be used for peaceful purposes. He said such a gesture would be a "powerful symbol" to the rest of the world that the United States plays by the same rules that it urges other countries to follow.

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