

SOUTHEAST COMPACT COMMISSION*

POLICY STATEMENT

Radiation Control in the United States

June 27, 2008

The Southeast Compact Commission finds that the current system of controls over ionizing radiation in the United States is inconsistent and fragmented, in that it does not regulate all sources of ionizing radiation. While most states operate a radiation control agency, not all states regulate all sources of ionizing radiation in the same manner, nor is there a national ionizing radiation policy. Some sources are not regulated in some states. Further, in some exclusive federal jurisdictions some sources are not regulated at all, as there is no national program for the regulation of radiation sources.

The same is true for the management of radioactive waste in the United States. The existing system is a patchwork quilt of inconsistent regulations and practices.

The Commission believes that the nation is lacking a unified vision for an optimal system for the control of ionizing radiation including the management of radioactive wastes. Consequently, little gets done.

With the leadership of President John F. Kennedy, the United States established a national policy to put a man on the moon. That policy statement established a vision such that combined efforts of all were devoted to making that vision a reality. The national policy became a mission statement and a common goal that all Americans could support and work towards in a unified effort. The Southeast Compact Commission believes such a common goal is needed with regard to managing ionizing radiation in the United States—we need a unified vision of the optimal system for the control of ionizing radiation, including the management of radioactive wastes.

Therefore, the Commission recommends that the United States Congress promulgate legislation establishing a national policy in regard to ionizing radiation, including the management of radioactive waste. Such legislation should establish a common goal that users and regulators could support and work towards and would designate a plan of action and responsibility for achieving the goal.

* The Southeast Interstate Low-Level Radioactive Waste Management Compact was enacted by its party states in 1983 and ratified by Congress in 1985. Party states currently include Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, Tennessee, and Virginia.

The mission of the Southeast Interstate Low-Level Radioactive Waste Management Commission (Southeast Compact Commission) is to ensure that adequate, reliable, and appropriate services are available, now and in the foreseeable future, such that low-level radioactive waste generated in the Southeast Region can be safely managed in an efficient, equitable, economical, and environmentally responsible manner in order that each party state may meet its responsibility for providing for the availability of capacity either within or outside the State for disposal of low-level radioactive waste generated within its borders (Article 1, PL 99-240).