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GORDON VEERMAN

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MR. VEERMAN: Good morning, or good afternoon. My name is Gordon Veerman. I'm fire chief at the Argonne National Laboratory. I'm here today representing the International Association of Fire Chiefs as an organization. The International Association of Fire Chiefs is a professional association founded 125 years ago to provide chief fire officers and managers of emergency service organizations throughout the international community with information, education, services and representation in the effort to protect citizens from the devastation of fire and other type of emergencies. That's the basic purpose of the International.

1 Here with the position paper for that association that the shipment of spent nuclear fuel -- I have a copy, a formal presentation which I will give to you of our position, but our concerns, we feel that the shipment of spent fuel can be done safely and adequately and we feel that it should be done; that it would be much safer in one location than spread throughout the country at the various locations which are subject to deterioration, sabotage and so forth. The fuel can be moved. It can be accomplished safely not only in the general population, but those emergency responders who need to respond to transportation and sensitive material if our criteria is met.

3 Safe shipment containers is necessary. We believe that the current containers are of adequate design and have adequate testing and are safe for the general public. It goes through my mind there's a container that was in Europe that was put on a flat-bed truck, put across the railroad tracks, a locomotive and four cars hit that container at 100 miles an hour. The container was usable after that accident. I hate to say that I don't know of any other shipping container out there that would withstand that type of abuse; that the containers must be properly marked and properly identified such as under the requirements of the Department of Transportation; route plans which take into account interstate highways, bypasses, heavily populated areas and other such critical factors.

2 Require the shippers not only to notify the state government's office, but also that the emergency responders along the route have to have a general idea when this is coming through. At two o'clock in the morning when the responders respond, they need to know what they're dealing with and what they may encounter. They also -- that during the early stages of shipment when the campaign starts, we feel that a tail escort, knowledgeable person, escort this material to give the incident commander adequate information, have instrumentation to be able to help the incident commander decide if there is a problem and how to handle it. We feel that later on that we'll be able -- you could be able to probably eliminate that escort.

Most importantly, emergency response forces along the route must be trained to deal with an emergency, should one occur. We believe that currently there is adequate training programs available on the subject, but we fear that these programs may go too far in-depth into the subject matter and will never reach the core group of responders who need them. Training should be self-sustaining, it should be simple, it should be fairly shipment-specific so the people understand, and it's got to get to the people on the street. It's got to get to those on the local level. All too often we develop great programs and they end up at the state level and they never get to the people on the street, so we're very much in favor of some legislation that will make sure that the responders along the route get that education. The IAFC appreciates the opportunity to appear before you. Thank you.