April 22, 1996

My name is Addis Charless, Jr. I own, live on, and operate a ranch ten miles north of the Pantex facility.

Although I am somewhat comfortable with the current mission at Pantex, I have marked reservations about an expanded role at Pantex that would include permanent storage of plutonium pits, other plutonium scrap, uranium, etc., as well as processing/reprocessing of same, and the possiblity that a nuclear reactor of whatever type might be built there to accommodate any burning of mixed oxide fuel (MOX), or to produce tritium. 1/08.03.01

To expand Pantex's role to accommodate any or all of the above is to me grossly irresponsible in view of the fact that the plant lies above the largest fresh water aquifer in the U. S., and that said aquifer is the lifeblood of this area's agriculture industry. Why the Ogallala aquifer has not been classified as a Class 1 water source is a puzzlement to me. 2/09.04.04

None of the draft PEIS's have adequately addressed what would happen to this area's farm and ranch economy if a significant accident releasing substantial quantities of radionuclides were to occur regardless of how well it were to be cleaned up. I think the public's perception of the contamination would be such that it would make our products unmerchantable not just for the immediately affected area, but for the entire Panhandle's products. 3/09.09.04

TX-043

08 03 01 Comment Number 1

The Department of Energy acknowledges the commentor's opposition to new missions at Pantex. Decisions on storage and disposition of weapons-usable fissile materials will be based upon environmental analyses, technical and economic studies, national policy considerations, and public input.

09 04 04 Comment Number 2

Currently, waste/hazardous material treatment/handling operations are regulated to minimize the potential for releases of hazardous substances to the soil or surface water which could then migrate to the groundwater.

The Ogallala Aquifer has not been classified as a Class 1 (that is, sole source) aquifer since other sources of drinking water are available in areas above this aquifer.

09 09 04 Comment Number 3

Perceived risks are not exactly quantified. The impacts of such perceived risks to a region's economy are more difficult to evaluate. Moreover, NEPA documents do not, as a practice, include market analyses for housing, tourism, or agricultural products. Statements can be made that part of a region's economy (for example, agriculture) would be adversely impacted by a release of nuclear material. However, the degree of that impact cannot be quantified.

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It is a further contention by Pantex boosters that no substantial water pollution has occurred except for the perched water above the Ogallala aquifer. On June 27, 1995, a water sample was taken from one of my windmill wells and submitted for analysis. The results yielded the following information:

> For 16 high explosives tested for, results were BQL.
> For gross alpha, gross beta, Pu 239/240, Ra 226/228, Sr-90, tritium,
> U 234/238--detected, but below Safe Drinking Water Act maximums.

How much will these levels rise if Pantex's role is expanded? Is it something we are willing to risk? Is it truly necessary for the viability of Amarillo's or the Panhandle's economy? Is short term economic prosperity worth eternal contamination?

2/09.04.04 cont.

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