

## § 8.3 [Reserved]

**§ 8.4 Interpretation by the General Counsel: AEC jurisdiction over nuclear facilities and materials under the Atomic Energy Act.**

(a) By virtue of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended,<sup>11</sup> the individual States may not, in the absence of an agreement with the Atomic Energy Commission, regulate the materials described in the Act from the standpoint of radiological health and safety. Even States which have entered into agreements with the AEC lack authority to regulate the facilities described in the Act, including nuclear power plants and the discharge of effluents from such facilities, from the standpoint of radiological health and safety.

(b) The Atomic Energy Act of 1954 sets out a pattern for licensing and regulation of certain nuclear materials and facilities on the basis of the common defense and security and radiological health and safety. The regulatory pattern requires, in general, that the construction and operation of production facilities (nuclear reactors used for production and separation of plutonium or uranium-233 or fuel reprocessing plants) and utilization facilities (nuclear reactors used for production of power, medical therapy, research, and testing) and the possession and use of byproduct material (radioisotopes), source material (thorium and uranium ores), and special nuclear material (enriched uranium and plutonium, used as fuel in nuclear reactors), be licensed and regulated by the Commission.<sup>12</sup> In carrying out its statutory responsibilities for the protection of the public health and safety from radiation hazards and for the promotion of the common defense and security, the AEC has promulgated regulations which establish requirements for the issuance of licenses (Parts 30-36, 40, 50, 70, 71, and 100 of this chapter)

<sup>11</sup>Pub. L. 83-703, 68 Stat. 919.

<sup>12</sup>The terms "byproduct material," "source material," and "special nuclear material" are defined in the Atomic Energy Act, sections 11e, 11z, and 11aa, respectively. The terms "production facility" and "utilization facility" are defined in sections 11v and 11cc of the Act, respectively.

and specify standards for radiation protection (part 20 of this chapter).

(c) The Atomic Energy Act of 1954 had the effect of preempting to the Federal Government the field of regulation of nuclear facilities and byproduct, source, and special nuclear material. Whatever doubts may have existed as to that preemption were settled by the passage of the Federal-State amendment to the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 in 1959.<sup>13</sup>

(d) Prior to 1954, all nuclear facilities and the special nuclear material produced by or used in them were owned by the AEC.<sup>14</sup> This Federal monopoly of atomic energy activities was due in large part to the use of atomic energy materials and facilities in our national weapons program, and the large capital investment required for their development. The Atomic Energy Act of 1954 permitted private ownership of nuclear facilities for the first time, but only under a comprehensive, pervasive system of Federal regulation and licensing. That Act recognized no State responsibility or authority over such facilities and materials except the States' traditional regulatory authority over generation, sale, and transmission of electric power produced through the use of nuclear facilities.<sup>15</sup> As interest grew in the private construction of facilities and the use of atomic energy materials, and the numbers of persons qualified in the field increased, questions arose as to the role State authorities should play with regard to the public health and safety aspects of such activities. Several bills were introduced with respect to Federal-State cooperation in 1956 and 1957.<sup>16</sup> An AEC proposed bill which would have authorized concurrent radiation safety standards to be enforced by the States was forwarded to the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy in 1957, but was never reported out. Finally, in 1959, legislation was enacted whose purpose was to promote an orderly regulatory pattern between the Federal and State governments with

<sup>13</sup>Pub. L. 86-373, 73 Stat. 688.

<sup>14</sup>Atomic Energy Act of 1946, Pub. L. 79-585, 60 Stat. 755.

<sup>15</sup>Sec. 271, 42 U.S.C. 2018.

<sup>16</sup>S. 4298 and H.R. 8676, 84th Cong., second session; S. 53, 85th Cong., first session.