

May 30, 2001

Mr. Ralph E. Beedle
Senior Vice President and
Chief Nuclear Officer, Nuclear Operation
Nuclear Energy Institute
1776 I Street, NW Suite 400
Washington, D.C. 20006-3708

SUBJECT: NUCLEAR ENERGY INSTITUTE (NEI) COMMENTS ON NUREG-1738,
"TECHNICAL STUDY OF SPENT FUEL POOL ACCIDENT RISK AT
DECOMMISSIONING NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS"

Dear Mr. Beedle:

Thank you for your April 26, 2001, letter commenting on the staff's recently issued NUREG-1738, "Technical Study of Spent Fuel Pool Accident Risk at Decommissioning Nuclear Power Plants," dated February 2001. In your letter, you commented that the approach taken in the NUREG was not based on a realistic evaluation of risk, provided a worse-case estimate, and overstated the risk posed by spent fuel pools. You also recommended that the NUREG be withdrawn and reissued after an independent peer review panel examined the technical basis of the NUREG.

As you are aware, we held numerous public meetings with NEI and other stakeholders while preparing this study. During some of these meetings, you had raised similar objections. We, however, continue to disagree that the study provides a worst-case estimate.

As directed by the March 13, 2001, staff requirements memorandum (SRM) issued after the Commission meeting on the technical study, we are developing a policy options paper for Commission consideration by the end of May 2001. The paper will present policy issues and our recommendations associated with exemptions and regulations for decommissioning nuclear power plants. Our assessments and recommendations will consider the results of the technical study and other pertinent information related to spent fuel pool accident risks. As indicated in the SRM, the Commission will consider comments and recommendations from stakeholders, including your comments in the April 26, 2001, letter when it reviews our paper. At that time, the Commission will consider whether the technical study should undergo a peer review and perhaps be revised, and/or expanded.

Mr. Ralph E. Beedle

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We appreciate your provided comments on this important issue. Please contact Suzanne Black, Acting Deputy Director of the Division of Systems Safety and Analysis, at 301-415-3226, if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Samuel J. Collins, Director
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

cc: George E. Apostolakis, ACRS Chair

Mr. Ralph E. Beedle

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We appreciate your provided comments on this important issue. Please contact Suzanne Black, Acting Deputy Director of the Division of Systems Safety and Analysis, at 301-415-3226, if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Samuel J. Collins, Director
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

cc: George E. Apostolakis, ACRS Chair

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* See previous concurrences

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