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United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3201

June 22, 2001

The Honorable Richard Meserve
Chairman
United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, DC 20555

Dear Chairman Meserve:

I am writing to you concerning a recent meeting I had with a group of elected officials in North Carolina to discuss the license amendment for the Shearon Harris Nuclear Power plant in Wake County, North Carolina.

Although we discussed several matters, I would like to specifically bring to your attention their concerns about the potential vulnerability of nuclear power plants to terrorist threats. Specifically, the group of elected officials provided me a copy of a memo dated February 3, 1999, from Captain David Orrik, a Security Specialist at the Office of Nuclear Regulation (NRR) addressed to William Travers, the executive director of operations at the NRC, outlining the status of the Operations Safeguards Response Evaluation (OSRE) Program. As I understand it, this program was created to focus on the ability of nuclear power plants to respond to or thwart terrorist attacks. The memo, however, indicates that the OSRE Program was terminated at the end of FY 1998, though there appears to have been some effort to reinstate the program.

I believe it is critically important that NRC have the capability, resources and expertise to address the possibility of any potential terrorist threat.

I would appreciate a response from you regarding the status of the OSRE Program (or any other NRC program with a similar mission). I also request that you provide me with an explanation of how the NRC gathers information about possible terrorist threats and how the agency evaluates that information with respect to the construction and operation of nuclear power plants. Finally, I request that you provide me with an explanation of the requirements with which nuclear power plants must comply to ensure their preparedness in the event of a terrorist attack. I expect your response would include information about how preparedness of various plants is determined by the NRC and the frequency with which plants are evaluated.

Thank you for your attention to this request. I look forward to hearing your response.

Yours sincerely,


John Edwards

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