

October 2, 2001

Ms. Thelma A. Chavez-Lopez  
2554 Augusta Ct.  
Santa Maria, CA 93455

Dear Ms. Chavez-Lopez:

I am responding to your letter addressed to Dr. Shirley Jackson, the former Chairman of the U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). In your letter, you raise concerns regarding the safety procedures that would be used should a spill occur at the Diablo Canyon Power Plant (DCPP) in San Luis Obispo County, and how you would know you would be in no danger in case of an evacuation.

The inherent safe design of nuclear power plants makes a release of hazardous materials that would pose a threat to the public extremely unlikely. A spill of radioactively contaminated water, or other hazardous materials, would be isolated and cleaned up in accordance with plant procedures. It is highly unlikely such a spill would affect the public. Nevertheless, like all nuclear power plant operators, Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E), along with the State of California and San Luis Obispo County, have emergency plans to ensure the health and safety of the public in the event of any emergency that might result from operations at DCPP. Those plans describe the responsibilities and actions to be taken by plant, local, and State emergency organizations, provide guidance for classifying the emergency, taking appropriate response actions, and notifying the public.

Regarding your concern about notification of safe conditions, the local phone books for San Luis Obispo County include a "Customer Guide," which provides emergency response information for DCPP. A copy is enclosed for your information. In the event of a plant emergency, San Luis Obispo County's Early Warning System sirens and the Emergency Alert System (EAS) radio stations in the area would notify the public. The Customer Guide in the local phone books lists the EAS radio stations that are used to provide information about actions that the public should take (including evacuation, if necessary) and how to know when the conditions are safe.

The local and State government agencies are responsible for coordinating any necessary evacuation, providing shelter outside of the affected area, and notifying the public when safe and normal conditions have been restored.

I trust that this response adequately addresses the issues that you raised in your letter. For your additional information regarding NRC's regulatory functions to protect public health and safety, I am enclosing a booklet "NRC - Regulator of Nuclear Safety." If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact Girija Shukla, the NRC Project Manager for DCP, at (301) 415-8439, or by e-mail at [gss@nrc.gov](mailto:gss@nrc.gov).

Sincerely,

*/RA/*

Samuel J. Collins, Director  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Enclosures:    1. Customer Guide  
                  2. NRC - Regulator of Nuclear Safety

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Sincerely,

*/RA/*

Samuel J. Collins, Director  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Enclosures: 1. Customer Guide  
2. NRC - Regulator of Nuclear Safety

\*\* See attached

\*See previous concurrence

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