

EDO Principal Correspondence Control

FROM: DUE: 10/19/01

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FINAL REPLY:

Representative David Price

TO:

Chairman Meserve

FOR SIGNATURE OF :

** GRN **

CRC NO: 01-0483

Travers, EDO

DESC:

ROUTING:

Storage and Transportation of High-Level Nuclear
Waste (Judy Hogan)

Travers
Paperiello
Kane
Norry
Craig
Burns/Cyr
Wessman, IRO
Collins, NRR

DATE: 09/27/01

ASSIGNED TO:

CONTACT:

NMSS

Virgilio

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS OR REMARKS:

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
CORRESPONDENCE CONTROL TICKET

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ACTION OFFICE: EDO

AUTHOR: REP David Price
AFFILIATION: REP
ADDRESSEE: Richard Meserve
SUBJECT: Constituent concerns regarding storage of high-level nuclear waste

ACTION: Signature of EDO
DISTRIBUTION: Chairman, OCA to Ack

LETTER DATE: 09/17/2001
ACKNOWLEDGED: No
SPECIAL HANDLING:
NOTES:
FILE LOCATION: ADAMS

DATE DUE: 10/19/2001 **DATE SIGNED:**

DAVID PRICE
4TH DISTRICT
NORTH CAROLINA

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET



CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
September 17, 2001

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Dr. Richard Meserve, Chairman
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
One White Flint North
11555 Rockville Pike
Rockville, MD 20852-2738

Dear Dr. Meserve:

I am writing to convey the concerns of one of my constituents, Ms. Judy Hogan, regarding the storage of high-level nuclear waste.

Earlier this year, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) issued a report estimating the annual risk of fire at a decommissioning nuclear power plant spent fuel pool as 2.4 per million. Ms. Hogan believes this estimate translates into an unacceptable risk of a spent fuel pool accident at a single site over the next 30 years, as well as an unacceptable risk of at least one accident in the United States over that time period. Does the accident risk identified in the report for decommissioning plants also apply to currently-operating plants? If not, is the risk for operating plants higher or lower? Has the NRC estimated the risk of a spent fuel pool accident at a single site or at all sites over a long period of time, such as thirty years? If not, can an extrapolation be made from the estimate for a single year contained in the report?

Ms. Hogan is also concerned about evacuation planning for nuclear power plants. Does the NRC require plants to prepare a plan for evacuation in the event of a nuclear accident? If so, how does the NRC determine the size of the required evacuation area, and does this planning take into account the possibility of a spent fuel pool accident?

Ms. Hogan believes that spent fuel stored in dry casks is less vulnerable to terrorist attack than spent fuel stored in pools and that damage from such an attack on dry casks would be less consequential than damage resulting from an attack on a spent fuel pool. Has the NRC evaluated the relative susceptibility of these alternate storage methods to terrorist threats?

Ms. Hogan is also concerned about the future transportation of spent nuclear fuel to a proposed permanent repository. Specifically, do the containers used to transport spent fuel emit harmful amounts of radiation? If so, how dangerous is the radiation emitted to a bystander? What degree of damage are the containers designed to withstand in the event of a transportation accident or a terrorist attack? Have routes been proposed for transporting spent fuel to the proposed Yucca Mountain site, and do any proposed routes include interstate highways?

Finally, Ms. Hogan proposes that it would be safer to permanently store spent nuclear fuel on-site in dry casks at individual nuclear power plants. Would there be any technical difficulties involved in permanently storing spent fuel in this manner?

- Dr. Richard Meserve, Chairman
September 17, 2001
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Thank you for your time and attention to these concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Price". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "D".

DAVID PRICE
Member of Congress

DP:dn