

November 26, 2001

Mr. David Lochbaum  
Nuclear Safety Engineer  
Union of Concerned Scientists  
1707 H Street, N.W., Suite 600  
Washington, D.C. 20006-3919

Dear Mr. Lochbaum:

Thank you for your letter of October 3, 2001, concerning the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission's (NRC's) actions following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. As you know, immediately following the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, the NRC advised nuclear power plant licensees to go to the highest level of security, and all promptly did so. With continued uncertainty about the possibility of additional terrorist activities, the Nation's nuclear power plants remain at the highest level of security and the NRC continues to monitor the situation.

In addition, the staff has undertaken an effort to reevaluate the NRC's safeguards and physical security programs thoroughly. This reevaluation will be a top-to-bottom analysis involving all aspects of the agency's safeguards and physical security programs.

Your letter alleges that the NRC Director of Nuclear Reactor Regulation advocated a return to normal security preparedness based on costs to licensees. I understand that the Director subsequently discussed this issue with you and explained our threat evaluation process, which continually assesses appropriate licensee and NRC responses to the current threat environment. Should you have a similar concern in the future, I encourage you to contact the staff directly.

You also commented about additional resource needs for the NRC's safeguards program. This issue is among those being considered by the agency in its ongoing program reevaluation.

Again, thank you for your comments.

Sincerely,

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Richard A. Meserve