

December 13, 2001

George Richardson, First Selectman
Stanley Lane, Second Selectman
Benjamin Crehore III, Third Selectman
Office of the Selectmen
Town of Westport
6 Fowles Point Road
Westport, Maine 04578-0001

Dear Messrs. Richardson, Lane, and Crehore:

I am responding on behalf of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) to your letter of October 3, 2001, in which you inquired about the safeguards, security, and safety procedures at the Maine Yankee Atomic Power Station (Maine Yankee) in Wiscasset, Maine, in light of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001.

Immediately after the terrorist attacks, the NRC advised commercial nuclear facility licensees to go to the highest level of security, which they did. The specific actions are understandably sensitive and, therefore, cannot be discussed in a public document, but they generally include additional patrols and security posts, augmented security forces and capabilities, heightened coordination with law enforcement and military authorities, and more restricted access of personnel and vehicles to the sites. The NRC issued a security advisory to decommissioning and decommissioned commercial reactor sites and has discussed heightened security measures with Maine Yankee. An NRC Security Specialist was on site October 15 through 17, 2001, to conduct an audit of the increased security measures taken at Maine Yankee. In addition, on October 25, 2001, the NRC issued a Confirmatory Action Letter to confirm certain actions taken by Maine Yankee Atomic Power Company to enhance security at the Maine Yankee site. The NRC determined that the additional security measures taken at the site were acceptable at this time. With continued uncertainty about the possibility of additional terrorist activities, the Nation's commercial nuclear facilities remain at the highest level of security and the NRC continues to monitor the situation.

As your letter suggests, the recent terrorist attacks have focused attention on the need to review policies and practices related to safeguards and physical security measures for civilian nuclear facilities. I, with the full support of the Commission, have directed the NRC staff to reevaluate the NRC's safeguards and physical security programs for civilian nuclear facilities, including decommissioned facilities. This reevaluation will be a top-to-bottom analysis involving all aspects of these programs. The NRC staff recently provided the Commission with the initial scoping document for this reevaluation, which includes provisions for reviewing potential structural and safeguards vulnerabilities at decommissioning facilities such as Maine Yankee. Based on this review, NRC regulations and requirements may be revised or updated, as appropriate. I am confident that the site-specific concerns mentioned in your letter will be considered during the agency's review.

Your letter requested that the NRC report to you any changes made in policy or regulations to address the new threat environment. As noted above, the agency's reevaluation of safeguards and physical security programs is now underway. It would be premature to revise or update the security regulations before the reevaluation of these programs is complete. In the interim, if you have any questions about safeguards and physical security at Maine Yankee, please contact the NRC project manager for Maine Yankee, Michael Webb, at (301) 415-1347.

The Commission appreciates your concerns. If you have further comments or questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Richard A. Meserve

cc: See Attached List

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