



**UNITED STATES  
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION  
REGION IV  
611 RYAN PLAZA DRIVE, SUITE 400  
ARLINGTON, TEXAS 76011-8064**

May 22, 2002

Mrs. Nancy Goldapp  
10627 County Road P38  
Omaha, Nebraska 68142

**SUBJECT: CONCERNS REGARDING AIRPORT EXPANSION AND  
FAA COORDINATION WITH NRC**

Dear Mrs. Goldapp:

During our end-of-cycle meeting on April 26, 2002, you expressed the following concerns. Our responses to your concerns are addressed below.

**Concerns:**

Officials associated with the Blair community airport, located 8 miles west of the plant, on 73 acres with a 3400-foot runway are planning to expand the airport to 255 acres with 5500-foot runway to accommodate corporate jets. Since September 11, 2001, you have been doing research on the Internet concerning intense fires that cause concrete to become brittle and steel to melt, causing structures to collapse. You are worried that, with the expansion of the airport to allow corporate jets to land and take off, this poses additional risk to the Fort Calhoun Station, i.e., crashing a corporate jet loaded with explosives into the containment or the spent fuel pool area. You want to know if the NRC is involved or has input to the FAA on decisions to allow expansion of airports located near nuclear power plants.

The same question applies if Fort Calhoun obtains an ISFSI license in the future.

**NRC Response:**

The design of nuclear facilities gives them inherent capability to protect public health and safety through such features as robust containment buildings, redundant safety systems, and highly trained operators. They are among the most hardened structures in the country and are designed to withstand extreme events, such as hurricanes, tornadoes, and earthquakes. In addition, all NRC licensees with significant radiological material have emergency response plans to enable the mitigation of impacts on the public in the event of a release.

In regard to the spent fuel storage facility, the capacity of spent fuel dry storage casks to withstand a crash by a large commercial aircraft has not been analyzed. Nonetheless, storage casks are robust and must be capable of withstanding severe impacts, such as might occur during tornadoes, hurricanes, or earthquakes. In the event that a cask were breached, any impacts would be localized. All spent fuel storage facilities have plans to respond to such an emergency, drawn up in consultation with local officials.

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NRC is not involved with airport expansion decisions. However, to address your specific concerns since September 11, 2001, licensees and the NRC have strengthened their relationship and coordination with the FAA. Flight restrictions over nuclear facilities have been issued. Licensees notify the NRC and FAA when aircraft are reported near facilities, and reports have been investigated.

We appreciate your interest in NRC activities. I believe that I have addressed all of your questions and concerns. If not, please call me at (817) 860-8282.

Sincerely,

*/RA/*

Claude E. Johnson, Chief  
Project Branch C  
Division of Reactor Projects

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