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815 SIXTEENTH STREET, N.W.
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August 24, 1959

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Mr. John C. McCone, Chairman
United States Atomic Energy Commission
Germantown, Maryland

Dear Chairman McCone:

Enclosed you will find the comments and recommendations of the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations regarding the Commission's notice of proposed rule making, published May 23, 1959, in the Federal Register, proposing to amend the Commission's existing regulations on factors to be considered in site evaluation of nuclear power and test reactors.

The AFL-CIO endorses the emphasis the Commission is now placing on safety criteria to protect the health and safety of concentrations of population near proposed sites of nuclear reactors. We hope however, that before the Commission adopts amended regulations, it spells out in more detail and in clear and understandable language, just how the criteria will be applied in actual evaluation of the proposed reactor site. Otherwise, in our opinion, the proposed amendments, if placed into force as they now stand, will lack necessary substance and will not be adequate to the problem.

Sincerely yours,

W. F. Schmitzler
William F. Schmitzler
Secretary-Treasurer

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Enclosure

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August 21, 1959

Recommendations by the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations on Proposed Rule Making by the Atomic Energy Commission with Respect to Factors Considered in Site Evaluations for Power and Test Reactors

(Published in the Federal Register May 23, 1959)

The American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations has long urged the need for the strongest possible safeguards to be accorded both workers on jobs involving exposure to ionizing radiation and the public at large. Our interest, therefore, extends not only to regulations dealing with occupational exposure to ionizing radiation, but with the effect as well, of construction and operation of nuclear power and test reactors upon the general safety of population concentrations in the vicinity.

We feel that these regulations, as proposed, are more of a description of criteria to be used in determining location of reactor sites, than the working out of detailed language which will provide the fullest safety yardstick possible.

The AFL-CIO urges that:

1. The use of atomic energy be so controlled and licensed that the threat of malfunction and accident be reduced to the lowest humanly possible minimum by uniform and adequately enforced standards.
2. The Commission show greater sensitivity to recommendations and warnings of its Reactor Safeguards Committee. This must be done in order that preliminary evaluation of the reactor site problem may be accomplished before the proposed project is pushed too far in the direction of the construction stage in research, design and financial commitments, and done within the framework of the general feasibility and safety features of the proposed project.
3. That these proposed regulations are written with less vagueness and in less broad generalities. The regulations as proposed, give the Commission entirely too much leeway in determining site locations.

3. (continued)

The Commission's experience in evaluating the locations of a large number and variety of reactor designs is sufficient to produce more definite and more detailed regulations within the broad criteria it has listed in its proposed site making amendment of May 23, 1959.

The AEC-CID urges that the Commission take into consideration these factors as we have outlined them and use the more detailed site selection regulations to minimize the general advance of the nuclear power industry, both on land and on sea with the maximum health and safety protections afforded to workers and the general public. Finally, we feel that the Commission is placing the proper emphasis on public safety in connection with the location of nuclear power and test reactors, near concentrations of population. This philosophy as the Commission knows, will receive the full support of the AEC-CID, if carried forward into uniform and workable regulations.
