

June 26, 2002

The Honorable John P. Kelly  
Freeholder  
The Ocean County Board of  
Chosen Freeholders  
Toms River, New Jersey 08754-2191

Dear Mr. Kelly:

I am responding on behalf of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) to your letter of May 21, 2002, in which you requested assistance in ensuring residents of Ocean County that Oyster Creek Nuclear Generating Station is at the proper state of heightened readiness to respond to a security event at that site.

Since the events of September 11, 2001, the NRC has acted to ensure the continued safety of nuclear power plants, including Oyster Creek. Immediately following the attacks, the NRC advised nuclear power plant licensees to go to the highest level of security and all promptly did so. Subsequently, I, with the full support of the Commission, directed the staff to thoroughly reevaluate the NRC safeguards and security programs. This work is underway.

To put the actions taken in response to the initial and subsequent advisories in the customary regulatory framework and to implement additional security enhancements which have emerged from the NRC's on-going security review, the NRC issued Orders to the Nation's 104 commercial nuclear power plants. For security reasons, the details of specific security requirements cannot be made public, but include such things as additional personnel access controls, enhanced requirements for guard forces, increased control of vehicles approaching nuclear facilities, and heightened coordination with appropriate local, State, and Federal authorities. The requirements will remain in effect until such time as the Commission determines that the level of threat has diminished, or that other security changes are needed following the security review.

Let me assure you that nuclear power plants are among the most hardened and secure civilian facilities in the United States. Nuclear power plants have an inherent capability to protect public health and safety through such features as reinforced concrete containment buildings, redundant safety systems, highly trained operators, extensive security capability, and emergency response plans to mitigate impacts on the public in the event of a release.

The NRC actively monitors the security posture at all U.S. nuclear power plants and will take appropriate measures to ensure the continued secure environment and safe operation at Oyster Creek. Please contact me if you have additional questions regarding this matter.

Sincerely,

*/RA/*

Richard A. Meserve