

July 18, 2002

Dr. George E. Apostolakis, Chairman
Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, DC 20555-0001

SUBJECT: RECOMMENDATIONS PROPOSED BY THE OFFICE OF NUCLEAR
REGULATORY RESEARCH FOR RESOLVING GENERIC SAFETY ISSUE-189,
"SUSCEPTIBILITY OF ICE CONDENSER AND MARK III CONTAINMENTS TO
EARLY FAILURE FROM HYDROGEN COMBUSTION DURING A SEVERE
ACCIDENT"

Dear Dr. Apostolakis:

I am writing in response to your letter of June 17, 2002, on the above subject. In your letter you indicated that you believed the results of the technical assessment of this issue are highly uncertain with regard to both the costs and benefits, and the judgement that igniters alone would preclude a hydrogen detonation. You further recommended that the Office of Nuclear Regulatory Research (RES) should complete additional analyses to quantify uncertainties prior to providing the technical assessment results to the Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation (NRR).

The staff agrees with the Committee that there are a number of uncertainties associated with the resolution of this issue. As recommended by the Committee, we intend to complete additional analyses to better understand these uncertainties and, as part of these analyses, will consider the comments of the Committee in its June 17th letter and as articulated by the Committee members during our presentation. Furthermore, pursuant to your request that the ACRS would like to review the results of the additional analyses and the proposed recommendation for resolving GSI-189, the staff will provide its findings to the Committee later this year.

Sincerely,

/RA by William F. Kane Acting For/

William D. Travers
Executive Director
for Operations

cc: Chairman Meserve
Commissioner Dicus
Commissioner Diaz
Commissioner McGaffigan
SECY

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Letter dated: 07/18/02

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