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FINAL REPLY:

Representative Nita M. Lowey

TO:

Chairman Meserve

FOR SIGNATURE OF :

** PRI **

CRC NO: 02-0616

Chairman Meserve

DESC:

Personnel Lack of Training Against Terrorist
Attacks and Low Salaries at Nuclear Facilities

ROUTING:

Travers
Paperiello
Kane
Norry
Craig
Burns/Cyr
Miller, RI

DATE: 09/25/02

ASSIGNED TO:

CONTACT:

NSIR

Zimmerman

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS OR REMARKS:

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
CORRESPONDENCE CONTROL TICKET

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AUTHOR: Nita Lowey
AFFILIATION: REP
ADDRESSEE: Richard Meserve
SUBJECT: Personnel lack of training against terrorist attacks and low salaries at nuclear facilities.....

ACTION: Signature of Chairman
DISTRIBUTION: RF, OCA to Ack

LETTER DATE: 09/19/2002

ACKNOWLEDGED No

SPECIAL HANDLING:

NOTES: Commission Correspondence

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DATE DUE: 10/07/2002

DATE SIGNED:

EDO --G20020554

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September 19, 2002

Chairman Richard Meserve
Nuclear Regulatory Commission
11555 Rockville Pike
Rockville, MD 20852

Dear Chairman Meserve:

I would like to bring to your attention a report just released by the Project on Government Oversight and reported in the September 12, 2002, *New York Times*. The study cites profound concerns among nuclear security personnel about their ability to defend our nation's nuclear facilities. I believe the issues identified in the report warrant the immediate attention of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Security guards at 24 nuclear reactors at 13 sites interviewed for the report felt they lacked the training to repel armed terrorists. They commented that fatigued guards, putting in 70+ hour work weeks after September 11, 2001, often fall asleep on the job. Further, low salaries – many guards are paid less than custodians – have driven experienced personnel to seek better paying jobs, including air security positions. Some also expressed concerns that the layout of nuclear facilities, including the location of guard towers and surveillance lights, increase their vulnerability.

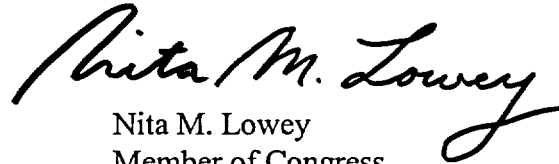
As long as the nation's nuclear security personnel lack confidence in the security they provide, the American people cannot rest easy. Over the last year, we have made the commitment to provide the best possible security to the American public. However, we cannot expect our nuclear security agents to do so under the conditions outlined in this report.

As an original cosponsor of the Nuclear Security Act, which would establish a federal nuclear security force and plans for handling threats like those discussed in this report, I believe we must continue to work to ensure the highest level of protection at our nuclear facilities. Until this legislation is passed, I urge the NRC to review these concerns carefully and take appropriate corrective measures.

Recent incidents at Indian Point, a nuclear facility adjacent to my district, further suggest gaps in nuclear security. I am very concerned about reports of missing weaponry and successful attempts to penetrate this plant via the water.

While I have called for the decommissioning of Indian Point, I believe we must continue to be vigilant about the security of every nuclear facility in the nation. Thank you for your attention to these matters. I look forward to working with you in the future on this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nita M. Lowey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Nita" being the most prominent part.

Nita M. Lowey
Member of Congress