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ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH CONGRESS

**U.S. House of Representatives**  
**Committee on Energy and Commerce**  
**Washington, DC 20515-6115**

W.J. "BILLY" TAUZIN, LOUISIANA.  
CHAIRMAN

October 25, 2001

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12509

The Honorable Richard A. Meserve  
 Chairman  
 U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
 One White Flint North  
 11555 Rockville Pike  
 Rockville, MD 20852-2738

*Pressurized Water  
Reactors (PWR)*

Dear Chairman Meserve:

On August 3, 2001, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) issued a bulletin, Bulletin 2001-01, "Circumferential Cracking of Reactor Pressure Head Penetration Nozzles," seeking information from certain nuclear power licensees regarding the structural integrity of reactor pressure vessel head penetrations. The NRC Bulletin addresses concerns about the structural integrity of reactor penetration nozzles in response to recent discoveries of cracked and leaking vessel head penetration nozzles, including control rod drive mechanism nozzles, at four U.S. pressurized water reactors. As mentioned in the Bulletin, one function of the vessel head penetration nozzles is to maintain the reactor coolant system pressure boundary. Circumferential cracking of vessel pressure head nozzles can pose a safety risk if permitted to progress to the point that nozzle integrity is in question and the risk of a loss of coolant accident or probability of a vessel head penetration nozzle ejection increases.

We appreciate the work that the NRC and nuclear power industry is doing to address this issue, including public meetings held earlier this year between the NRC and industry and the issuance of Bulletin 2001-01 ("bulletin"). The bulletin requests information from licensees to enable the NRC staff to determine whether licensee inspection practices need to be augmented and whether additional regulatory actions are needed to address cracking concerns. Responses to the bulletin were due early September.

So that we may have a more complete understanding of the issue, we request that you provide Committee staff with a briefing by November 15, 2001, to discuss the safety implications raised by the cracked and leaking vessel head penetration nozzles, the information contained in the bulletin, and the industry's response to the bulletin. We also ask that your briefing include any plans of the Commission and industry to resolve these concerns. At the briefing, please provide a copy of any reports, analysis, or other documents relating to or in response to information obtained in response to the bulletin.

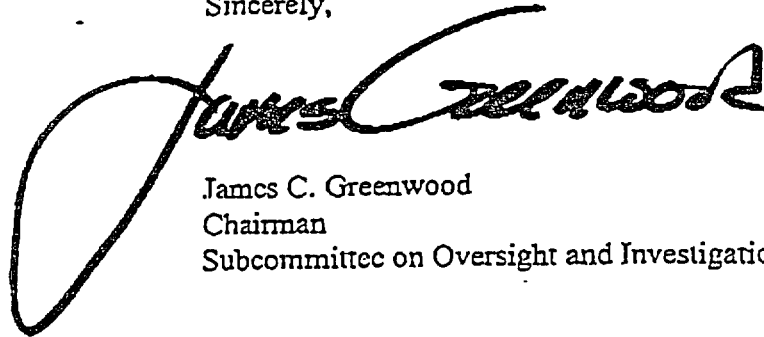
10/25..To OCA/EDO for Appropriate Action ..Cpy to; RF...01-0568  
 ....Coordinate action with....EDO

A/3

The Honorable Richard A. Meservc  
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If you have any questions about this request, please contact Mr. Dwight Cates of the Committee staff at (202) 226-2424. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James C. Greenwood". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large loop at the beginning.

James C. Greenwood  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations

cc: The Honorable Peter Deutsch, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations  
The Honorable W.J. "Billy" Tauzin, Chairman  
The Honorable John D. Dingell, Ranking Member  
The Honorable Joe Barton, Chairman, Subcommittee on Energy and Air Quality  
The Honorable Rick Boucher, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Energy and Air Quality