

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 28, 2003

The Honorable Tom Ridge
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

The Honorable Richard Meserve
Chairman
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, DC 20555

Dear Secretary Ridge and Chairman Meserve:

We are pleased to learn that you are focusing on the issue of security at commercial nuclear power plants across America. We agree that this is a critical issue that must be addressed if we are to adequately secure our homeland.

It is because of this concern that the Nuclear Security Act (S. 1746) was introduced in November 2001. As passed unanimously by the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works last year, the Nuclear Security Act would have established a task force on nuclear infrastructure security to study and report on measures needed to protect sensitive nuclear facilities from terrorist attack and ensure that they are prepared in the unfortunate event that any such attack should ever occur in the future. This bill would have required the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) to issue new regulations, nuclear facilities to take specific steps to upgrade security, and federal agencies to take specific actions to improve emergency preparedness, all based on the conclusions and recommendations of the task force.

The Nuclear Security Act received broad, bipartisan support in the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works in the 107th Congress. Although the Committee reported the bill with unanimous support, the legislation regrettably did not come to the floor for a vote. That is why, in January of this year, we introduced the Nuclear Security Act as S. 131, which is largely based on the language reported by the Committee last year.

We are encouraged by your interest in improving security and emergency preparedness at our nation's nuclear power plants, and we would like to work with you at your earliest convenience to develop legislation to better secure our nuclear facilities against the threat of terrorism. We look forward to working with the Department of Homeland Security and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission on this critical issue. If you have any questions about this request, please contact us or have your staff contact Gregory Jaczko (Senator Reid, 224-3542) or Gabrielle Tenzer (Senator Clinton, 224-4451).

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We appreciate your consideration of our request and look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,


HARRY REID
United States Senator


HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
United States Senator


JAMES JEFFORDS
United States Senator


JOHN EDWARDS
United States Senator


JOSEPH LIEBERMAN
United States Senator


TOM HARKIN
United States Senator

U.S. Senator Harry Reid

Senator for Nevada, Assistant Democratic Leader

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