

April 28, 2003

The Honorable Saxby Chambliss
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Chambliss:

Thank you for your letter of March 11, 2003. I truly appreciate the confidence you expressed regarding the work we are doing at the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) to ensure that adequate security measures are in place at our nation's nuclear plants. You correctly state that American nuclear power plants have been recognized by experts as the most secure of our nation's industrial facilities. Having said this, we recognize our continuing responsibility to maintain a high level of security at NRC licensed facilities and activities.

The NRC has reviewed *The National Strategy For the Protection of Critical Infrastructure And Key Assets*, to which you refer. Staff is now in the process of developing action plans for these initiatives including 1) working with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), plant owners, operators, and, in some cases, States in developing a standard methodology for conducting vulnerability and risk assessments, 2) pursuing legislation to enhance security for nuclear power plants, and 3) enhancing public outreach, awareness, and emergency preparedness programs. The NRC is currently working on the initiatives consistent with the Strategy.

The NRC had developed a very cooperative relationship with the Office of Homeland Security, which now continues with the Department of Homeland Security and the Homeland Security Council. In fact, NRC's Office of Nuclear Security and Incident Response was created, in part, to facilitate communications and coordinate on homeland security issues. We participate on a number of planning and coordination committees, communicate frequently on policy and program issues, and are making significant progress in enhancing the security of nuclear facilities and radioactive materials.

We agree that enhancements to nuclear security and incident response have contributed to continued adequate protection of the public. These enhancements are described in a March 31, 2003 letter that former Chairman Meserve recently sent to you, as well as many other members of Congress and other high-level officials. We have accomplished many of these enhancements through the issuance of regulatory Orders as the most effective and efficient approach at this time. We recognize the value of allowing licensees to complete the enhancements in a holistic and coherent manner and are reflecting this in the flexible and timely implementation of the Orders. Once the basic requirements are revised to reflect changes in the current threat environment, we will conduct the necessary rulemakings to revise our regulations as resources permit.

Senator Saxby

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Once again, thank you for your continued confidence in NRC programs. Please contact me if you have additional questions regarding this matter.

Sincerely,

/RA/William D. Travers

William D. Travers
Executive Director
for Operations

Senator Saxby

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Once again, thank you for your continued confidence in NRC programs. Please contact me if you have additional questions regarding this matter.

Sincerely,

/RA/William D. Travers

William D. Travers
Executive Director
for Operations

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PMDA R/F

W. Travers, EDO

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W. Dean, EDO

K. Cyr, OGC

D. Wessman, IRO

P. Norry, EDO

C. Schum, EDO

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J. Davis, NSIR

J. Crutchley, NSIR

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*See previous concurrence

OFFICE	NSIR:PMDA	NSIR:PMDA:C	NSIR:DIR	EDO
NAME	E Weinstein*	J Davis*	M Weber for RPZ*	W Travers
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