



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

February 3, 2000

COMMISSIONER

The Honorable John McCain
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator McCain:

On December 10, 1999, I had the opportunity to visit the Palo Verde Nuclear Power Plant near Phoenix, Arizona. During that visit, I conducted an extensive tour of the plant, and met with about 150 plant employees. I also had the pleasure to meet with senior utility executives, including Bill Stewart, Arizona Public Service's (APS) President of Generation, to discuss important matters facing the nuclear industry and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). I believe the visit was successful because it gave me a hands-on perspective of the plant's performance, it provided an opportunity for APS management and me to exchange views on important matters, and it provided an excellent forum for me to share information about the nuclear industry with plant employees.

I am aware that many of your constituents are interested in the safety and economic issues associated with the Palo Verde plant. As I have done with a number of Senators and Congressmen over the last year, I would like to extend an offer to personally brief you on the results of my visit. Not only will this allow me to share with you my impression of the facility, but I can also discuss my own views of how electric industry restructuring and our reinvention efforts at the NRC may affect your constituents.

In the coming days, I will have my staff contact your scheduler about arranging a meeting with you. In the interim, should you or your staff have any questions, please feel free to call me at (301) 415-1855 or Brian McCabe, my Technical Assistant for Reactors, at (301) 415-1867.

With best wishes,

Jeffrey S. Merrifield