

Original Due Date: 01/23/2004

Ticket Number: 020030214

Document Date: 12/24/2003

NRR Received Date: 12/30/2003

From:

Barbara Boxer

TACs:

MC1657

To:

Niles Diaz

*** YELLOW ***

For Signature of:

Routing:

Dyer
Borchardt
Craig
Sheron
NRR Mailroom
Case

Description:

Emergency inspection of the Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant

Assigned To:

G100

DLpm

Contact:

MARSH, LEDYARD (TAD) B

Special Instructions:

2 to 3 page summary of licensing approach for seismic issues. Coordinate with RIV



CHAIRMAN

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

December 24, 2003

The Honorable Barbara Boxer
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Boxer:

On behalf of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), I am writing in response to your December 23, 2003, letter to me, urging that the NRC undertake an emergency inspection of the Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant following the December 22, 2003, earthquake that occurred approximately 35 miles northwest of the plant in San Simeon, California. In fact, following the earthquake December 22, both Pacific Gas & Electric company and our onsite NRC resident inspectors independently conducted inspections of the plant to assess any damage.

Immediately following the first shock, our NRC resident inspectors established a direct open telephone link between the station's control room and both NRC's headquarters office in Rockville, Maryland, and the NRC Region IV office in Arlington, Texas. This line was kept open by one of the two inspectors and information concerning the station's status was continuously provided to NRC staff.

Consistent with NRC requirements, an "unusual event" was declared at 11:22 a.m. PST. This is the lowest of the four level emergency classifications prescribed by NRC regulations. Within an hour, dozens of workers at Pacific Gas & Electric Co., (PG&E) began comprehensive examinations of the plant's foundation and of the station's structures, systems, and components to determine if they were damaged. These examinations were performed by PG&E operators and other engineering staff with extensive knowledge of the systems and components. While this work was underway, our resident inspectors performed their own independent inspection of the station's major safety systems, the plant foundation and plant structures, systems, and components to confirm that the licensee examinations were comprehensive and thorough and to make an independent assessment of potential damage. The NRC inspected the plant searching for broken, shifted or leaking pipes and their support braces; displaced equipment; cracks in cement walls and the plant's foundation and other signs of damage. No damage was observed by either the licensee's examinations or the NRC's inspection. As a prudent follow-up, the NRC plans additional inspections at the plant over the next several weeks. The results of these NRC inspections will be documented in an inspection report and we will send you a copy.

Diablo Canyon is constructed and licensed to withstand and operate during an earthquake more powerful than the one of December 22, 2003. In addition, as part of the original plant license, PG&E was required to implement a program to reevaluate the seismic design bases used for the Diablo Canyon Power Plant. This latest earthquake will be evaluated as part of that program.

The Honorable Barbara Boxer

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In addition to the actions taken in the past few days, PG&E has informed the NRC that it has formed an event review team. The team will review the actions taken by PG&E in response to the earthquake, develop lessons learned, and establish improvements if needed, for responding to these type of emergencies in the future. The NRC will closely monitor the team's activities, assess its findings and recommendations, and confirm through additional inspections that PG&E has implemented the team's findings. This inspection will also be documented in an inspection report that will be provided to you.

NRC shares your concern that nuclear power plants be operated in a safe manner to protect public health and safety. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Nils J. Diaz

12/23/03 17:02 FAX 415 856 6701

BARBARA BOXER

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BARBARA BOXER
CALIFORNIA

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COMMERCE, SCIENCE
AND TRANSPORTATION
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United States Senate

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December 23, 2003

Nils Diaz
Chairman
Nuclear Regulatory Commission
1 White Flint N. Bldg.
11555 Rockville Pike
Rockville, MD 20852

Dear Chairman Diaz:

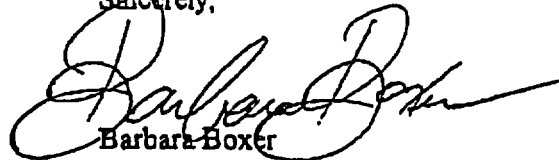
I am writing to you to urge that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission undertake an emergency inspection of Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant. I am concerned that the 6.5 magnitude earthquake which struck the area yesterday may have caused damage to the plant that has not yet been detected.

I have been advised that a serious earthquake could cause structural damage to the underlying foundation of the plant's reactors. I request that, as part of your work, you inspect the foundation as well as the cooling tubes and other piping in the facility.

I am sure that Californians would feel more secure knowing that the Diablo Canyon plant has been inspected. It is important to rule out any damage and therefore any increased risk that may have been caused by the earthquake.

I urge you to act quickly. We must ensure that all facilities are safe. I will contact you in the next few days.

Sincerely,



Barbara Boxer
United States Senator

Mike

Came into Ops center reingler
copy given to Jake Embelman
by HODs. Jake will
get sy to Region IV and in

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