11/24/03
68FR 66501
(138)

January 13, 2004

Chief
Rules and Directives Branch
Division of Administrative Services
Office of Administration
U.S. NRC
Washington, D.C. 20555-0001

RECEIVED
2004 JAN 21 AM 8:17
Rules and Directives Branch USNRC

Dear Chief:

I am very disturbed to learn that although after the 1975 Browns Ferry, AL nuclear plant fire your agency required utilities to establish fire barriers to protect electrical cables running from the control room to reactor safety systems from fire and that when in the early 1990's the most commonly-used fire barrier, Thermo-Lag, repeatedly failed independent tests of its effectiveness and later in the decade, your agency required Thermo-Lag to be removed and new fire barrier systems established — to date, these systems are not in place at most reactors, and the utilities are relying instead on "operator actions" or plant workers manually operating the once-automated equipment by throwing a switch, pulling a circuit breaker, or turning a valve to shutdown the reactor in the event of fire — returning us to the pre-Browns Ferry days, which could result in meltdowns. I am appalled that your agency is seeking to make

Template = ADM-013 (OVER — please) E-RFDS = ADM-03 Add = R. Dudley (RFD) + (RHE)

January 13, 2004

matters worse by issuing proposed new rules allowing this approach! I am very much opposed to this irresponsible sanctioning of potentially life-threatening easing of fire protection regulations.

I remain, seeking a nuclear-free world,

Claire Martineau
5000 Boulevard K #1118
Ventnor, NJ 08406