

11/26/03
68 FR 66501
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From: <gronk314@earthlink.net>
To: <nrcprep@nrc.gov>
Date: Thu, Jan 29, 2004 1:39 AM
Subject: Nuclear plants need stronger safety codes, not weaker

Dear Chief Rules & Directives Bra,

Right now, there are nuclear power plants that do not meet the basic fire safety regulations in nearly a dozen states! This puts communities at risk of serious nuclear accidents resulting from fires inside nuclear power plants. Instead of exempting these plants from meeting fire safety regulations, we need to demand they come into compliance.

I was outraged to learn of your plans to relax enforcement of fire safety regulations for nuclear power plants. These regulations were written as the result of a near catastrophic fire in 1975 and many plants still have not come into compliance. Weakening the regulations will put communities, the environment and workers at serious risk of nuclear accidents. At a minimum, the automated shutdown equipment should be safe during a fire. Instead of weakening fire codes, you should enforce the law and require that all plants comply with the strictest standards for fire safety.

As a former licensed senior operator, instructor, shift supervisor and nuclear plant outage manager, it is clear to me that nuclear regulation needs more technically based enforcement and less politically motivated bending of the current regulations and of common sense.

A previously strong technology has been constantly eroded by political efforts such as this to the point where the regulatory climate no longer encourages logical, independent analyses of plant events, but rather focuses on canned actions with serious repercussions for anyone daring to venture into the region of intelligent thought regarding the prescribed programs and procedures. The nuclear industry has been in a downward slide for many years as a result of NRC and INPO politics, and it's time stronger, more effective leadership turns it around before politics are all that's left and technical expertise has become an afterthought. Your proposed rule is yet another in a string of irresponsible actions that appear to be designed more for the benefit of companies that own nuclear plants than the people who actually are capable of operating them, and the people that live nearby.

Please reconsider this ridiculous attempt to circumvent the rules.

Please consider this an official comment.

Sincerely,

Rolland Scheels
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