

March 10, 2005

The Honorable Frank Pallone, Jr.
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Congressman Pallone:

I am responding to your letter dated January 26, 2005, in which you requested that the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) extend the public comment period for a petition filed by the Committee to Bridge the Gap (PRM 73-12).

The NRC requested public comments on the petition in a *Federal Register* notice published on November 8, 2004 (69 FR 64690). The notice provided 75 days for public comment, which is the agency's standard public comment period. The notice also stated that comments received after the end of the comment period will be considered if practical. The Commission values the input of stakeholders and considers public involvement in, and information about, NRC activities to be a cornerstone of strong, fair regulation of the nuclear industry. The NRC staff will make every attempt to consider stakeholder comments that are received after the January 24, 2005, due date for comments.

Furthermore, the staff is considering the petition filed by the Committee to Bridge the Gap as part of the rulemaking effort to revise the design basis threat (DBT) requirements in Section 73.1 of Title 10 of the Code of Federal Regulations. As a result, stakeholders will get an additional chance to provide input on the DBT when the proposed amendments to 10 CFR 73.1 are issued for public comment. The Commission encourages your constituents to provide their comments at that time. The NRC will provide notice of this effort in the Federal Register and on the NRC website, www.nrc.gov.

The Commission appreciates your interest in this matter. The NRC takes very seriously your concern about the potential threat of a terrorist attack against nuclear power plants. The secure use and management of radioactive materials is one of the most important strategic goals of this agency.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Annette L. Vietti-Cook
Secretary of the Commission