

**From:** A. Randolph Blough, *RI*  
**To:** DRP All -- Nuclear safety Professionals  
**Date:** 3/22/04 12:13PM  
**Subject:** Re: march 18 meeting w/ PSEG on Salem/hope creek work environment

Below are excerpts of one of the several articles about last week's meeting with PSEG.

I have **bolded** some sections to show you how Hub presented the overall perspective.

I've also shortened the article for easy reading, by eliminating some detail of what the company said, as well as quotes of one local activist who called for immediate S/D.

regards,

randy

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#### NRC, PSEG Meet To Discuss Safety Issues

Bridgeton News  
 Friday, March 19, 2004  
 By BILL GALLO JR.  
 Staff Writer

LOGAN TWP. -- The operator of the three nuclear power plants at Artificial Island is taking immediate action to help create an atmosphere in which its employees are comfortable in raising safety concerns, federal regulators were told Thursday.

The meeting here between representatives from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and PSEG Nuclear, the operator of the three plants at the Island in Lower Alloways Creek Township, came as a result of an extraordinary letter sent Jan. 28 by the NRC warning the utility that it needed to take steps to prevent a "chilled environment" that could lead to problems at the facility.

At the heart of the NRC's concerns is the process at the Island for finding and fixing problems at the plant, the second largest nuclear complex in the U.S.

**"Let me just say at the outset Salem and Hope Creek units are operating safely. However, events, results of inspections and other assessments that the NRC has performed have revealed weaknesses that require PSEG's attention,"** said Hubert J. Miller, regional administrator for the NRC and author of the letter.

The Jan. 28 letter to the head of PSEG Nuclear's parent company, Public Service Enterprise Group, was described as a proactive step by the NRC, designed to prevent any potential problems at the plants because of what has been described as "safety culture" issues at the Island. The NRC referred to equipment problems and the apparent reluctance or fear among employees to raise safety concerns with PSEG management.

**"Nuclear power plants are complex machines and all plants have problems. The best plants are the best plants because they are very good at identifying problems and fixing them at an early stage,"** Miller said. **"The best plants are the best plants because they are good at maintaining equipment."**

**Miller said it is critical for employees to have a willingness to report problems, then find them and fix them.**

The letter from the NRC came as the agency was winding down its own special review of the work environment at the Island which began last fall.

PSEG officials said two surveys have been conducted of Island employees concerning the relationship

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between workers and management and some of the the same findings have emerged.

"Let me tell you right up front, what we have concluded from these assessments so far confirms that we are below industry norms in creating a safety-conscious work environment," said Frank Cassidy, president and chief operating officer of PSEG Power said.

Cassidy said several meetings at the corporate level have been held over the NRC's concerns and steps needed to correct problems at the Island. Cassidy said the needed resources will be committed to fix the problems.

Part of PSEG's response to the NRC concerns has been the creation of an eight-member in-house assessment team consisting of members who have formerly worked in the nuclear industry or in regulation of the industry.

While conducting their own interviews with present and past PSEG employees, they are also studying the results from the two earlier surveys of employee attitudes referred to by Cassidy.

This team's report is due to be delivered to senior management on April 15.

The NRC expects to discuss PSEG's plan for improvement during its annual assessment of performance at the Island later in the spring. Information from the performance surveys and the self-assessment will be posted on the utility's Web site, PSEG officials said.

**Mail Envelope Properties** (405F1EA4.FC8 : 9 : 34932)

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**From:** A. Randolph Blough

**Created By:** ARB@nrc.gov

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