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U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

August 9, 2006

Dr. Nils J. Diaz, Chairman
Nuclear Regulatory Commission
11555 Rockville Pike
Rockville, MD 20852

E/16/06
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RULES AND DIRECTIVES
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Dear Dr. Diaz:

I send this letter as my official comment regarding the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) issued as part of the operating license renewal process for the Oyster Creek Nuclear Generating Facility in Forked River, New Jersey.

The recent DEIS, issued by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, states there are no environmental impacts that would preclude renewing the operating license extension of Oyster Creek. According to the report, the Commission has determined that the adverse environmental impacts of license renewal would not prevent energy planning decision makers from granting the operating extension.

As I understand it, the NRC conducted a thorough analysis to reach this determination. However, I am concerned the environmental impacts of a potential atmospheric release of radiation have not been adequately addressed in this report. In 2005, the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) released a report evaluating the potential risks of boiling water reactor (BWR) plants with above ground spent fuel pools. The report, entitled Safety and Security of Commercial Spent Fuel Storage, found the potential vulnerabilities of BWR pools are plant-design specific, and recommended that,

"The Nuclear Regulatory Commission should undertake additional best-estimate analyses to more fully understand the vulnerabilities and consequences of loss-of-pool coolant events that could lead to a zirconium cladding fire."

Although the DEIS contains a specific section regarding Severe Accident Mitigation, I inquire as to whether or not the NAS suggested analysis was incorporated into the statement? We must not underestimate the catastrophic impacts to our environment in the event a cooling pool is compromised.

I have long supported the involvement of an independent and unbiased third party, such as the NAS, in the license renewal process of Oyster Creek. Additionally, I support the inclusion of their suggested analysis in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS), and urge the NRC to make every effort to do so.

Thank you for your continued commitment to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Jim Saxton
Jim Saxton
Member of Congress

SOUSI Review Complete

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