

April 15, 1986

Mr. Owen Thero  
Program Manager  
Quality Technology Company  
P. O. Box 600  
Sweetwater, TN 37874

Dear Mr. Thero:

As you are aware, the NRC has been at the Watts Bar site copying the Quality Technology Company (QTC) files containing all employee concerns identified to QTC. I appreciate your personal support and that which QTC provided us for this effort. Upon completion of copying, we will then transport two copies of these records to Washington and maintain one copy at Watts Bar in a secure storage building.

Your letters of April 2 and April 5, 1986 to me expressed, among other things, your concern that the confidentiality of the information be maintained. Consistent with Harold Denton's Order of January 30, 1986 and NRC's letter to QTC dated February 21, 1986, NRC intends to protect the identity of individuals who provided information under a confidentiality agreement with QTC while ensuring that the safety issues contained in the files are identified to TVA or responsible NRC staff for evaluation and resolution. In order to assist TVA in identifying the safety-related issues, where possible NRC is planning to expurgate the names, addresses, and other identifying information from the safety-related files and provide the sanitized information to TVA for appropriate follow-up action. Although the specific procedures for sanitization have not yet been finalized, these procedures will incorporate, with appropriate modifications, the same methods contained in the QTC sanitization procedures. Where this process involves specifics which would compromise confidentiality, NRC will establish its own follow-up action. In addition, significant safety-related issues identified during the NRC screening effort may be selected for more comprehensive staff evaluation.

The NRC will exercise diligence to assure that specific issues which the staff considers could compromise confidentiality if provided to TVA at any level will be retained for NRC follow-up. On matters such as this, the NRC must balance its preeminent responsibility for public health and safety with its responsibility to protect confidentiality. As stated in the enclosed Statement of Policy on Confidentiality, the Commission "will make its best efforts to protect the identity of a confidential source," and will limit access within the NRC only to those with a need-to-know and will divulge it outside the agency only in certain narrow situations.

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You have also indicated that there are 36 concerns raised by individuals providing information to you which involve actions by NRC personnel. The NRC's Office of Inspector and Auditor has been alerted to these potential matters for investigation. Until further staff procedures are put in place, the TVA Oversight Group will control access to the records both at the site and at the headquarters offices. Such records will not be kept at the Watts Bar site.

We recognize that you also have some concern that NRC employees who will have access to the unexpurgated QTC records may at some future date go to work for TVA, thus creating the possibility that identifying information of confidential sources will be available to TVA. All NRC employees with access to information revealing the identities of confidential sources are aware of the Commission's Policy on Confidentiality. We have confidence in the integrity of these employees and in their understanding of the need for and their willingness to protect the confidentiality of informants. If any NRC employees with access to the unexpurgated TVA records do go to work for TVA, we will counsel them concerning the sensitivity of this information and the continuing need to maintain the confidentiality of individuals.

Thank you very much for your interest in this matter.

Sincerely,

Hugh L. Thompson, Jr., Director  
TVA Oversight Group

Enclosure:  
As stated

cc: S. A. White, TVA

*am* TVA:OSG  
RWessman:pab  
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*am*  
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