



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

December 21, 1995

Mrs. Alma F. Conley
12369 North Fox Den Drive
Farragut, Tennessee 37922

Dear Mrs. Conley:

I am responding to your letter of November 9 and December 7, 1995, addressed to Dr. Shirley Ann Jackson, Chairman of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. You enclosed a copy of your November 7, 1995, letter to Representative Duncan.

The first two pages of your November 7, 1995, letter refer to fear of retaliation. However, you did not provide specifics concerning any incidents of retaliation. Please contact us if you have more specific information. We encourage members of the public to bring safety concerns to the NRC. If employees are harassed or intimidated as a result of protected activities, protection is available through the Department of Labor.

In the past the NRC has noted instances of harassment and intimidation by TVA and appropriate actions were taken. In recognition of past problems in this area the NRC conducted an inspection to determine whether employee concerns were handled appropriately. Your observations regarding fear of retaliation by TVA are not consistent with the results of recent inspections conducted by the NRC staff. In Inspection Report 95-63 (enclosed) the staff documents the results of a survey of TVA and contractor employees. Relative to fear of retaliation or harassment for the use of the employee concerns program, the vast majority (95%) of the employees surveyed responded that they did not believe that such intimidation existed at Watts Bar.

You stated that "the resurrection of Watts Bar after twenty-three years is not a frivolous concern." We agree with your statement. The NRC has devoted significant resources in the inspection of Watts Bar. The results of these inspections are summarized in Supplement No. 17 to the Watts Bar Safety Evaluation Report (SER) (NUREG-0847). Based upon the inspections performed at Watts Bar the NRC concluded that the staff at Watts Bar Unit 1 is satisfactory and capable of operating the plant safely and that the safety systems will operate and perform their required safety functions.

You stated your concern about storing radioactive waste at the plant. The statement you attributed to me was taken out of context, since I was responding to a question on spent fuel. The NRC staff has responded to many questions from the public regarding radioactive wastes. You may find the enclosed meeting summary of November 3, 1995, and its Enclosure 3 (Pages 8 and 9), informative. Specifically regarding spent fuel, the NRC staff reviewed and approved the storage of spent fuel in the on-site storage pool in NUREG-0847, and Supplements 15 and 16 (enclosed).

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Mrs. A. Conley

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Your last point is about decommissioning. Part of your concern is due to your assumption that Watts Bar has a life of only 7 years. Watts Bar Unit 1 was authorized to operate at low power on November 9, 1995. Thus, the operating license permits operation for 40 years from November 9, 1995. Page 7 of Enclosure 3 of the enclosed meeting summary provides information on decommissioning funding.

If you have any additional questions after reading the enclosures, please contact Peter Tam at (301) 415-1451.

Sincerely,

Original signed by

William T. Russell, Director
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Enclosure: As stated

DOCUMENT NAME: G:\CONLEY

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FROM: DUE: 11/28/95

EDO CONTROL: 0000823
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FINAL REPLY:

Alma F. Conley

TO:

Chairman Jackson

Received 11/14/95

FOR SIGNATURE OF : ** GRN **

CRC NO: 95-1001

Russell

DESC:

WATTS BAR

ROUTING:

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DATE: 11/14/95

ASSIGNED TO: CONTACT:

NRR

Russell

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS OR REMARKS:

Put EDO & Chairman on for concurrence.
Chairman's Office to review response prior
to dispatch.

NRR RECEIVED: 11/14/95
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