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RULES REVIEW & DIR. BR.

Chief, Rules Review and Directives
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D.C. 20555-0001

Thomas Anderson
212 3rd Ave. N. Suite 350
Minneapolis, MN 55401
7 January 1995

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S. Flanders
5917R 63832
12/9/94

Dear Chief,

I have reviewed the Final Environmental Statement Draft (FESD) regarding the Watts Bar Nuclear Facility. My previous fears about this installation have intensified even further. It would be a colossal mistake to grant TVA an operating license for Watts Bar.

The FESD is vague about the storage of nuclear waste from Watts Bar. If there is anything to be learned from attempts to store nuclear waste in this country (in Minnesota, Massachusetts, New Mexico, and elsewhere) it is that the American public demands specificity, safety, and full disclosure, not merely hunches about where the waste MIGHT end up. In his letter to me dated 22 November 1994, Scott Newberry of your Commission told me, "The NRC has determined that high-level radioactive waste, such as spent fuel, can be safely stored on site with minimal environmental impact, for at least 30 years beyond the licensed operating life of a nuclear power plant." Assuming that to be true (a stretch in itself, given Watts Bar's history of ineptitude), what about the subsequent 9,970 years that this waste remains deadly? What if the D.O.E. never succeeds in establishing a nuclear dump at Yucca Mountain, or elsewhere, as U.S. Senator Paul Wellstone (D-MN) and others believe? Finding storage space for the waste piling up at EXISTING nuclear facilities is proving difficult if not impossible. Can blind faith in a process acknowledged by most as flawed lead to anything BUT a vast radioactive logjam to be shouldered by hundred of generations to come? What kind of legacy is this to leave behind for our children?

Mr. Newberry stated in his 22 November letter that "low level wastes generated at the Watts Bar plant will be buried at the Barnwell, South Carolina site." But isn't this site now closed to out-of-state waste? Also, the FESD asserts (p.5-17) that incineration of low-level waste will reduce waste volume. INCINERATION OF NUCLEAR WASTE? Is this not madness?

The FESD also suggests that waste can be stored at the Wake County, North Carolina site, which is experiencing its own delays and other problems, and may never open. Then what? It is folly to build a nuclear waste-producing facility without a place lined up to put the

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waste. Mr./Ms. Chief, would you go fishing before buying your bait, or a fishing license? Buy a telephone and expect it to work before having your service connected? Go on a trip expecting to buy gas each time your car sputters to a stop, completely empty? Planning is called for here. Not wishful thinking, but planning.

Nobody seems to want nuclear waste in their back yard or, increasingly, in anyone else's back yard. To authorize Watts Bar in the face of such uncertainty would be like starting your car inside a tightly sealed garage, and then waiting for someone to come by and open the door for you before you're killed by the carbon monoxide. The first (and in fact, only) step toward resolving this dilemma is to stop Watts Bar from producing the waste in the first place. Period.

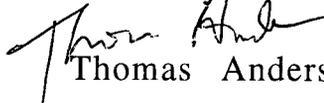
If Watts Bar were privately funded and faced shareholder scrutiny, construction would have stopped years ago. That TVA can subsidize its deficiencies with billions of taxpayer dollars is not merely prevarication. It is criminal. Though fiscal viability may not be your concern, the lesson is clear. Such irresponsibility should not be tolerated. TVA's passion for throwing good money after bad at Watts Bar begs the question of its technical credibility, and thus safety. Your own inspections have uncovered many cases of shoddy, unsafe workmanship. Have you found them all? Many infractions and incidents have been reported. Does the public know about them all? Does the N.R.C.? Can we afford to find out the hard way?

The writing is on the wall. Watts Bar is a lemon. TVA's recent cancellation of its other nuclear projects, its long history of problems at Watts Bar, and growing public opposition has rendered the completion of the Watts Bar Nuclear Facility (much less its licensing and operation!) INDEFENSIBLE.

Do TVA and the American public a favor and deny, once and for all, the authorization to continue wasting our money on this debacle. Turn it into an alternative energy center. Use it as a vocational school for this economically disadvantaged area. Seal off the area, throw open the doors, and let the beings of the river and forest (re)claim it as their own. Please don't allow it to operate.

I would appreciate specific responses to questions I've raised here. I've circled the question marks for this reason. Thank you.

Sincerely,


Thomas Anderson

cc: Vice President Al Gore
Various Tennessee media
TVA