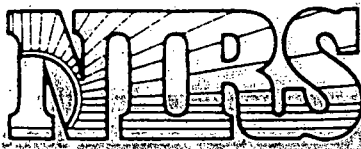


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Nuclear Information and Resource Service

1424 16th St. NW, Suite 404, Washington, DC 20036; 202-328-0002; fax: 202-462-2183; e-mail: nirsnet@igc.apc.org web: www.nirs.org

July 8, 1998

Hon. Parris Glendening
Governor
State of Maryland

REC'D BY: SE Annapolis, MD

Dear Governor Glendening:

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Enclosed is a memo that I hope you will find as disturbing and outrageous as I do.

This memo was written by one of your employees, a state inspector whose assignment is to oversee operations at Neutron Products Dickerson facility.

This inspector confirmed that he wrote this memo at a public meeting in Rockville, which I attended, on Friday, June 26, 1998.

As you will read, the head of Neutron Products threatened to shoot this state employee, and tried to provide him with basketball tickets.

I have worked in the nuclear power arena for some 15 years now. Normally, my organization does not concern itself with facilities such as Neutron Products; rather, we concentrate on monitoring nuclear power plants, radioactive waste sites, radiation issues, and sustainable energy issues. Calvert Cliffs is of far more interest to us than Neutron Products.

In this case, however, I have had to make an exception. Because it is my opinion, having monitored the nuclear industry for more than a decade, that there is no facility of any kind, anywhere in the U.S., which has the history of blatant, egregious and wholly avoidable violations of radiation protection practices and standards as has Neutron Products.

Further, the memo attached provides clear evidence that the present owner of Neutron Products is not fit to hold a license to use nuclear materials from the State of Maryland nor from the federal Nuclear Regulatory Commission. I simply cannot imagine a similar memo from an NRC inspector not resulting in the immediate shutdown of the nuclear facility involved, at least until there was a wholesale change at the very top of the licensee's organization.

I should mention that about two years ago, my organization lent a radiation monitor to the local group, Concerned Citizens of Dickerson, so they could get preliminary radiation readings of their neighborhood.

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Their findings absolutely shocked me, because I had taken that same radiation detector to the disastrous Chernobyl nuclear power reactor site in April 1996. The readings they found at some places in Dickerson, off-site of Neutron Products, were similar to the readings I found in the city of Chernobyl, just 12 miles from the crippled reactor, and in the center of Ukraine's "Dead Zones." Indeed, in the city of Chernobyl, people (who are all plant operators and clean-up workers) are allowed to stay for only two-week periods. After two weeks, they must leave the "Dead Zone" and spend two weeks away before returning.

It is an absolute embarrassment as a Maryland homeowner and a U.S. citizen that people in Dickerson live with radiation levels considered barely inhabitable by Ukraine—hardly the world's most progressive government.

But regardless of the radiation levels, the memo enclosed is ample evidence for the State of Maryland to close Neutron Products at least until there are complete ownership and management changes. The behavior described in this memo is not suitable for a hamburger franchise owner, much less the operator of hazardous nuclear technology.

I urge you, and every Maryland official, to act immediately to close Neutron Products at least until there is a complete overhaul of its operations, including a wholly new management and ownership. Anything less is simply insufficient. Indeed, there is no justification for the placement of such a hazardous facility in a populated area such as Dickerson. We will be closely monitoring the actions of every Maryland official on this cut-and-dried issue. We call upon you to provide the necessary leadership to end this threat to the lives and livelihoods of the people of Dickerson, Sugarloaf Mountain, and surrounding areas.

Because this plant is licensed by the State, please do not refer me back to Montgomery County; this is a State responsibility. If the State is not prepared to appropriately address this dire problem, we will consider initiating action to strip the State of its Agreement State status with the federal Nuclear Regulatory Commission and to fully address potential State liabilities for ongoing contamination and health problems in the Dickerson region.

I look forward to your speedy response.

Best wishes,


Michael Mariotte
Executive Director

Cc: Hon. Paul Sarbanes
Hon. Barbara Mikulski
Hon. Constance Morella
Hon. Albert Wynn
Hon. Shirley Jackson