

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 21, 2007

Atomic Safety and Licensing Board Panel
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D.C. 20555

Dear Panel Members;

We write to you today regarding the upcoming hearings on the re-licensing of the Oyster Creek Nuclear Generating Plant in Forked River, New Jersey as well as to request an investigation into the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's (NRC) adherence to the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) safety requirements.

As you know, we are concerned that the steel containment wall does not meet minimum safety requirements as a result of severe corrosion in several locations. Though the degradation of this containment wall has been measured by NRC-sanctioned engineers who deem it to be sufficient, a recent statement by another NRC engineer indicated the opposite. According to the original testimony presented before the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board (ASLB) by Dr. Mark Hartzman, a Senior Mechanical Engineer in the Division of Engineering, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation at the NRC, Dr. Hartzman indicated the steel barrier did not meet the minimum thickness requirements set by the ASME.

We are astounded to learn of this development. We understand that there is disagreement regarding the calculations and methodologies used to arrive at the number determining the thickness of the shell. Even so, it is not acceptable for the containment wall of a 636-megawatt nuclear power plant to just barely meet minimum federal requirements or perhaps, as suggested by Dr. Hartzman's testimony, to fall below the margin of safety. Therefore, we implore the ASLB to further investigate this matter and take this issue into consideration during next week's scheduled hearing.

We look forward to the favor of a reply and, as always, we entrust you will take this issue into the strongest of considerations as you continue to review the operating license extension application for Oyster Creek.

Sincerely,


Jim Saxton
Member of Congress


Chris Smith
Member of Congress