

Doc. 71

ENVIRONMENT

JUN 30 1972

Docket No. 50-247

Miss Karon Bierer
67 Collins Avenue
Uniontown, Pennsylvania 15401

Dear Miss Bierer:

We are pleased to respond to your letter of May 21, 1972, to Chairman Schlesinger.

Since you have specifically expressed concern about the impact of the Indian Point No. 2 Nuclear Plant on the Hudson River, enclosed is a copy of the AEC Draft Environmental Statement on Indian Point No. 2. It is presently being reviewed by many Federal, State and local agencies prior to preparing the Final Environmental Statement as required by the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 which places a statutory responsibility on the Commission to evaluate the environmental impact of any proposed nuclear power plant prior to issuance of a construction permit or operating license. The evaluation process is extensive and involves the applicant, various Federal, State and local agencies, and the general public. All the documents are placed in the public record and public hearings are held in the town or city nearest the proposed site of the facility. During the licensing procedure, all environmental issues are reviewed, evaluated, discussed and debated by the interested groups and individuals. The Atomic Energy Commission is only one party in the proceedings. When a decision is reached concerning issuance of a construction permit or operating license, it is based on the Commission's judgment of benefits versus environmental costs. Moreover, the Commission always places on the license or permit conditions which protect the public health and safety and minimize the environmental impact.

You will note that all of the areas of environmental impact raised by Mr. Gannon in his article in Science Digest (February 1972) are carefully addressed and considered. Unfortunately, many writers mislead people by making statements without researching their subject. His statement that "no government agency seems to be much worried" indicates a lack of knowledge of the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission and many other Federal agencies that have both responsibility and serious concern for environmental impacts associated with Federal actions such as authorizing operation of nuclear power plants.

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Many have proclaimed that the great potential of fusion reactors must be our long-term energy goal. Unfortunately, major technological breakthroughs will be required to achieve an experimentally sustained fusion reaction. Even when this is accomplished, it may take many years to build large economical plants for power production. In the meantime, the limited supply of uranium can be made to last until fusion reactors are achieved by improving the efficiency of fission reactor fuel consumption, and by the development and use of the fast breeder reactor.

I can assure you that we are making every effort to meet your environmental concerns which, by the way, have been described in the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. Also enclosed is a copy of this Act of Congress for your information.

Sincerely,

Original signed by
A. Giambusso

A. Giambusso, Deputy Director
for Reactor Projects
Directorate of Licensing

Enclosures:

- 1. Draft Environmental Statement
- 2. Act - Public Law 91-190

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