

April 12, 2010

The Honorable Barbara Boxer
Chairman, Committee on Environment
and Public Works
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Madam Chairman:

As part of a continuing effort to enhance the agency's effectiveness, I requested that the Bipartisan Policy Center (BPC) conduct an independent review of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) licensing process for new reactors. Under the leadership of former Senator Pete Domenici and former NRC Chairman Richard Meserve, the BPC engaged a broad range of stakeholders over several months and convened a forum to discuss several important aspects of this issue during their review. Enclosed is the final BPC report.

I am pleased that the BPC assessment recognizes and confirms the high-quality work of the NRC staff in conducting thorough and timely reviews of license applications. The agency has a strong commitment to continuous improvement, and I fully support the BPC's recommendation for the NRC to ensure that lessons learned from the first round of applications enhance any subsequent reviews. Moving forward, I plan to ask the NRC staff to conduct a lessons-learned analysis after the first combined license review has been completed. As part of this review, I also intend to ask the staff to develop policy proposals for Commission consideration that would strengthen the review process based on the lessons learned.

This independent report will be of great assistance to the NRC as it assesses and seeks to strengthen its licensing review process. I hope you will find this report useful in your work as you consider and develop energy legislation. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Gregory B. Jaczko

Enclosure: As stated

cc: Senator James M. Inhofe

Identical letter sent to:

The Honorable Barbara Boxer
Chairman, Committee on Environment
and Public Works
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510
cc: Senator James M. Inhofe

The Honorable Thomas R. Carper
Chairman, Subcommittee on Clean Air
and Nuclear Safety
Committee on Environment and Public Works
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510
cc: Senator David Vitter

The Honorable Henry A. Waxman
Chairman, Committee on Energy and Commerce
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515
cc: Representative Joe Barton

The Honorable Edward J. Markey
Chairman, Subcommittee on Energy
and Environment
Committee on Energy and Commerce
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515
cc: Representative Fred Upton

The Honorable Peter J. Visclosky
Chairman, Subcommittee on Energy
and Water Development
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515
cc: Representative Rodney Frelinghuysen

The Honorable Byron Dorgan
Chairman, Subcommittee on Energy
and Water Development
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510
cc: Senator Robert F. Bennett

The Honorable Jeff Bingaman
Chairman, Committee on Energy
and Natural Resources
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510
cc: Senator Lisa Murkowski

The Honorable Brian N. Baird
Chairman, Subcommittee on Energy
and Environment
Committee on Science and Technology
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515
cc: Robert D. Inglis

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable John Kerry
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Joseph Lieberman
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Lindsey Graham
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable George Voinovich
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jim Webb
United States Senate
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The Honorable John McCain
United States Senate
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The Honorable Mike Simpson
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515