



Union of Concerned Scientists

Citizens and Scientists for Environmental Solutions

July 15, 2010

Dr. Gregory B. Jaczko, Chairman
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, DC 20555-0001

Dear Chairman Jaczko:

I commend you for arranging to meet with representatives of local public interest groups yesterday as part of your visit to the Vermont Yankee nuclear plant. I greatly appreciate that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission provided a phone bridge that allowed me and others to participate remotely in the meeting. Much useful information was discussed during the meeting.

You stated a wish that the representatives could follow you around for a day at headquarters because they would hear many of the sentiments they expressed coming from the mouths of NRC managers and staffers. The example you gave was Mr. Borchardt's foremost concern being the importance of regulating safety at Vermont Yankee between now and the end of its operating license in 2012. My own experience talking with NRC staffers before and after meetings is consistent with that which you described.

The question is why NRC managers and staffers cannot be equally candid and forthcoming when discussing nuclear safety matters in public? Earlier this year, the NRC staff conducted the annual assessment meeting for the public near Vermont Yankee. No NRC staffer publicly expressed sentiments such as those you ascribed to Mr. Borchardt. Instead, the NRC staffers only discussed the rose with no mention of concerns about its thorns. It's not that the NRC staffers provided false information during the annual meeting; they just did not provide the full true picture. They withheld the information you wished people could hear by following you around White Flint. Their biased, one-sided, incomplete communications is a prime reason the public lacks trust in the NRC. We feel we are not getting the full story from the NRC. By your admitted wish, you implicitly concede our feelings are valid.

I also have wishes. I wish that people across America would not have to follow the Chairman around in order to hear the true full picture about safety at their nearby nuclear plants. I wish that NRC managers and staffers would say in public what they readily tell you in private. I wish that Open Government and transparency were realities and not just empty slogans.

I understand that the annual assessment meeting for Vermont Yankee was videotaped. If so, I recommend that you obtain a copy and view it. The record will show a significant gap between the stories you hear from NRC managers and staffers and the stories they relate to the public. I strongly suspect you will be amazed, and quite possibly outraged, by the size of that gap. That gap must be narrowed if not closed if the NRC is to regain public trust.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David A. Lochbaum". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

David Lochbaum
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