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ARIZONA CORPORATION COMMISSION

March 17, 2011

Mr. Randy Edington
Chief Nuclear Officer
Arizona Public Service
Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station
5801 S. Wintersburg Road
Tonopah, AZ 85354

Dear Mr. Edington:

In light of the tragic disaster in Japan and growing fears of a meltdown at the Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear plant, I write to request your assistance in ensuring that commissioners and the public are familiar with safety precautions and procedures at the Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station, which is located less than 50 miles west of central Phoenix.

Some Arizonans have expressed concerns about their health and safety in the event of a disaster, given Palo Verde's close proximity to locations where so many live and work. Therefore, I have called for a special open meeting in which these concerns may be addressed.

I am a strong proponent of nuclear power, and I believe that nuclear continues to be an absolutely essential component in a productive and reliable energy portfolio. Yet I also believe it is critical that we revisit our own emergency procedures as new information and potential lessons emerge from this heartbreaking disaster in Japan.

I understand there are significant differences between Palo Verde and Fukushima Dai-ichi. For instance, Palo Verde is the only nuclear-generating facility in the world that is not situated adjacent to a large body of above-ground water. Additionally, Arizona is not a region that experiences significant earthquake damage. Therefore, the risk of water-damage following a major earthquake - the catastrophic scenario which is now unfolding in Japan - is not a concern here in Arizona.

In helping to inform the public about Palo Verde's emergency preparedness, I hope to glean the following information:

- How often does Palo Verde undergo safety and emergency-procedure drills?
- If an extreme natural disaster were to hit in the vicinity of Palo Verde, what safety procedures would be implemented?
- If the power from the electric grid to Palo Verde were cut off, how many diesel generators does the facility have? Are these generators programmed to activate automatically, or must they be started manually?

March 17, 2010

Mr. Randy Edington
Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station

Page Two

- If the diesel generators were damaged and non-functioning, is Palo Verde equipped with sufficient back-up battery power? How long are the batteries designed to last?
- How independent or redundant are the back-up systems for Palo Verde?
- Japan is flooding its nuclear reactors at the Fukushima plant with corrosive seawater, in an attempt to cool the reactor cores. Because Palo Verde uses effluent and does not have a large body of water to use as a last resort, what steps could be taken at Palo Verde, in the event the facility's cores required rapid cooling?
- Venting of radioactive vapor by advanced nuclear facilities is extremely rare, but would filtration systems and scrubbers constitute a potential remedy, should a disaster occur?

I look forward to learning more at the upcoming special open meeting I have requested. I am hopeful that the information will illuminate the safety precautions taken by nuclear plants in the United States and, in particular, the Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station.

Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

Bob Stump
Commissioner

Cc: Governor Janice K. Brewer
Senator John McCain
Senator Jon Kyl
Congressman Paul Gosar
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Congressman Ben Quayle
Congressman Ed Pastor
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