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# California State Senate

## COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, UTILITIES AND COMMUNICATIONS



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March 31, 2011

Mr. William A. Maier  
Regional State Liaison Officer  
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Region 4  
612 E. Lamar Blvd., Suite 400  
Arlington, TX 76011-4125

Dear Mr. Maier:

The California Senate Energy, Utilities and Communications Committee will hold an informational hearing on Thursday, April 14, 2011, to examine safety issues concerning California's nuclear power plants in light of the nuclear crisis in Japan. As Chairman of the Committee, I respectfully request a representative(s) from the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) to attend and participate in this hearing.

I would like NRC to provide a brief overview of its oversight processes including inspections and enforcement programs and the reactor license renewal process, as well as be prepared to answer at the hearing, or include in NRC's overview presentation, the following:

### **Oversight Process: Inspection and Enforcement Programs**

- What is involved in an inspection? What does an inspector look for? How often do these occur? How long does it take to inspect a plant?
  - If a plant is cited for a violation, how does NRC follow-up with the plant?
  - In general, how much is human error at fault for violations that are discovered?



- What does NRC look for in redundancy in features of safety to determine whether they are adequate?
- What have past NRC inspections revealed about the level of safety at Diablo Canyon and SONGS?
- NRC voted on March 23<sup>rd</sup> to conduct a two-step review of all nuclear power plants in the nation.
  - What will this review entail?
  - When will the reviews be conducted for Diablo Canyon and SONGS?

#### **Nuclear Reactor License Renewal**

- What issues are considered in deciding whether to renew an operating nuclear reactor's license?
- Does seismic and secondary seismic safety factor into the relicensing renewal process? If so, how much? If not, why not?
- How far in advance of an operating reactor's license expiration date does a renewal application process need to begin? How far in advance do plants typically begin the license renewal application process?
- How far in advance of a reactor's license expiring can the NRC make a decision on whether to renew a license?
  - If pertinent information emerges about potential hazards to a plant after a license renewal approval but before the expiration of the original license, can that affect the approval?
- Where in the process is the relicensing application for Diablo Canyon?
- If relicense is not approved, then what?

Please note that among the other panels for the hearing, the topic of decommissioning a plant will be discussed but the Committee does not plan to ask NRC to present on this matter.

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The hearing is scheduled to take place after Senate floor session concludes on Thursday, April 14, 2011 at the California State Capitol, Room 4203, and is tentatively planned to last approximately 4 hours with NRC as the first panel with an allotted time of 60 minutes.

Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Alex Padilla". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

ALEX PADILLA  
Chairman

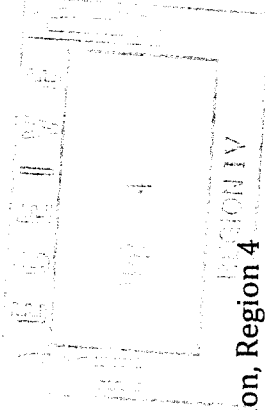
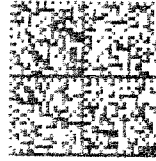
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