

May 10, 2011

The Honorable Richard G. Lugar
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Lugar:

On behalf of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), I am responding to your letter of April 4, 2011, forwarding correspondence from your constituent, Mr. Earl Click, Jr. Mr. Click expressed concern regarding radiation contamination from recent events in Japan reaching the United States.

A number of U.S. agencies are involved in monitoring and assessing radiation, including the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Department of Energy (DOE), and NRC. NRC regulations require nuclear power plants to report any radiation doses detected at the plant that could be harmful to the public. This would include doses that are generated by the plant or by an external source. EPA and DOE are responsible for more comprehensive domestic radiation monitoring. Specifically, the EPA has a national monitoring system in place (RadNet) that provides real-time environmental radiation measurement data. RadNet continuously monitors the nation's air and regularly monitors drinking water, milk, and precipitation for environmental radiation. EPA's website contains specific details of current RadNet activities, detection methods, and results for monitoring stations around the country.

The NRC is playing an active role in advising and assisting the Government of Japan's response to the ongoing situation at the Fukushima plants. Through this role and in coordination with federal partners, the NRC is analyzing data of radioactive emissions and modeling probable dispersion. Only trace amounts of radioactive isotopes consistent with the Japanese nuclear incident have been identified through U.S. monitoring; those trace amounts are far below levels of natural background radiation or of public health concern. The NRC does not expect any U.S. states or territories to experience harmful levels of radioactivity.

I hope this information is useful to you. We are continuing to work with our federal partners to ensure the continuing health and safety of the American people. If you have any additional questions, please contact me or Rebecca Schmidt, Director of the Office of Congressional Affairs, at (301) 415-1776.

Sincerely,

/RA by Martin J. Virgilio for/

R. W. Borchardt
Executive Director
for Operations

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