

## Burnell, Scott

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To: dmorse@frontier.com  
Subject: RE: Your e-mail to Chairman Jaczko

July 25, 2011

TO: David Morse  
Twelve Corners Middle School  
2643 Elmwood Ave.  
Rochester, NY 14618

Dear David;

Thank you for the e-mail and report you sent to Nuclear Regulatory Commission Chairman Jaczko.

Every form of electricity production includes some risk to human health and the environment. Fossil fuel plants create air pollution, the dams for hydroelectric plants can fail and cause flooding, manufacturing solar panels requires the use of hazardous chemicals, and so on. In the case of U.S. commercial nuclear power plants, the NRC's mission is to protect public health and the environment during the civilian use of radioactive materials. The NRC exists to ensure U.S. reactors are designed, built, maintained and protected to appropriately control the risks associated with nuclear power. The NRC continues to conclude U.S. nuclear power plants are operating safely and securely.

The companies that operate U.S. nuclear power plants must follow NRC rules by inspecting their plants essentially all the time. NRC staff who work at every reactor perform their own inspections every day, and additional NRC staff visit the plants throughout the year to perform more detailed inspections. All of this effort spots issues before they could affect plant safety, and the plant operators must address the issues, which can include fixing or replacing parts.

Your bibliography refers to the Web version of Facts on File, and that raises two issues. First off, the fofweb.com site requires a subscription to access its information, which makes it difficult for people to examine the documents you feel support your position. I contacted the company that provides Facts on File and they were kind enough to provide a copy of their Three Mile Island article. This brings me to the second issue: errors in the Facts on File document (the company has agreed to discuss the article's accuracy with the NRC). Although your bibliography also includes the NRC's fact sheet on Three Mile Island, it's unclear to me which sources you relied on for your report's statements. The NRC fact sheet provides a clear description of the accident that contradicts your report in a few places. Most importantly, neither Facts on File nor the NRC fact sheet refer to contamination of the Susquehanna River, since that did not occur.

I would strongly suggest re-reading the NRC's fact sheets on Three Mile Island and the Chernobyl accident for a better understanding of these events and their consequences. Please pay particular attention to the Three Mile Island sheet's description of the plant's containment doing its job and preventing an uncontrolled release of radioactive material into the environment. The NRC also has fact sheets that discuss dirty bombs and the storage of spent nuclear reactor fuel, which includes the use of large concrete and steel "dry casks."

Please feel free to contact me if you have any other questions regarding the NRC's role in ensuring U.S. nuclear power plants operate safely. Thank you.

Scott Burnell  
Public Affairs Officer  
Nuclear Regulatory Commission