

EDO Principal Correspondence Control

FROM: DUE: 06/28/12

EDO CONTROL: G20120414
DOC DT: 01/27/12
FINAL REPLY:

Representative Howard L. Berman
(White House Referral)

TO:

President Obama

FOR SIGNATURE OF :

** PRI **

CRC NO: 12-0274

Chairman Jaczko

DESC:

ROUTING:

Safety of the 23 Mark I Boiling Water Reactors
Currently Operating in the United States - White
House Referral WH1082296 (EDATS: SECY-2012-0302)

Borchardt
Weber
Johnson
Ash
Mamish
OGC/GC
Leeds, NRR
Zobler, OGC
Schmidt, OCA

DATE: 06/12/12

ASSIGNED TO:

CONTACT:

EDO

Rihm

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS OR REMARKS:

Please prepare response in accordance with OEDO
Notice 2009-0441-02 (ML093290179). NRR to provide
input to Roger Rihm, OEDO, if required. Roger Rihm
will coordinate response with OGC and OCA.

EDATS

Electronic Document and Action Tracking System

EDATS Number: SECY-2012-0302

Source: SECY

General Information

Assigned To: OEDO

OEDO Due Date: 6/28/2012 11:00 PM

Other Assignees:

SECY Due Date: 7/2/2012 11:00 PM

Subject: Safety of the 23 Mark I Boiling Water Reactors Current Operating in the United States - White House Referral WH1082296

Description:

CC Routing: NRR; OGC; OCA

ADAMS Accession Numbers - Incoming: NONE

Response/Package: NONE

Other Information

Cross Reference Number: G20120414, LTR-12-0274

Staff Initiated: NO

Related Task:

Recurring Item: NO

File Routing: EDATS

Agency Lesson Learned: NO

OEDO Monthly Report Item: NO

Process Information

Action Type: Letter

Priority: Medium

Signature Level: Chairman Jaczko

Sensitivity: None

Approval Level: No Approval Required

Urgency: NO

OEDO Concurrence: YES

OCM Concurrence: NO

OCA Concurrence: NO

Special Instructions: Please prepare response in accordance with OEDO Notice 2009-0441-02 (ML093290179). NRR to provide input to Roger Rihm, OEDO, if required. Roger Rihm will coordinate response with OGC and OCA.

Document Information

Originator Name: Representative Howard L. Berman

Date of Incoming: 1/27/2012

Originating Organization: Congress

Document Received by SECY Date: 6/11/2012

Addressee: President Barack Obama

Date Response Requested by Originator: NONE

Incoming Task Received: Letter

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
CORRESPONDENCE CONTROL TICKET

Date Printed: Jun 11, 2012 14:59

PAPER NUMBER: LTR-12-0274 **LOGGING DATE:** 06/07/2012
ACTION OFFICE: EDO
AUTHOR: REP Howard Berman
AFFILIATION: CONG
ADDRESSEE: PRES Barack Obama
SUBJECT: White House Referral WH1082296 - concerns the safety of the 23 Mark I Boiling Water Reactors currently operating in the US
ACTION: Signature of Chairman
DISTRIBUTION: OCA to Ack.
LETTER DATE: 01/27/2012
ACKNOWLEDGED No
SPECIAL HANDLING: Commission Correspondence.
SECY to close out with the White House and will provide them with a copy of the signed response.
NOTES: Document is dated 1/27/12; referred to DOE on 5/1/12;
referred to NRC on 5/30/12; arrived at NRC on 6/7/12.
FILE LOCATION: ADAMS
DATE DUE: 07/02/2012 **DATE SIGNED:**

EDO --G20120414

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YLEEM D.S. POBLETE
STAFF DIRECTOR



One Hundred Twelfth Congress
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Foreign Affairs
2170 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
www.hcfa.house.gov
January 27, 2012

102-1082296
HOWARD L. BERMAN, CALIFORNIA
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DEMOCRATIC STAFF DIRECTOR

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President,

I am writing to express my concern regarding the safety of the 23 Mark I Boiling Water Reactors currently operating in the United States. These are the same type of nuclear reactors that experienced such catastrophic failures at Fukushima, Japan last year, and have the same weaknesses and vulnerabilities as those ill-fated reactors.

It is clear that the Mark I reactors in the Fukushima disaster have serious design flaws. Protestations that such reactors in the United States are safe because the unique combination of factors in Fukushima – strong earthquake, an unusually-large tsunami beyond the safety design limits, and the siting of the reactor complex on the coast to be susceptible to such effects – have the distinct quality of “whistling past the graveyard.” Catastrophic events are usually unique, and assurances that “it can’t happen here” are short-sighted. I would urge your Administration to acknowledge this, and undertake a significant program to address these design flaws, or to require the permanent shutdown of these reactors at the earliest opportunity.

A second issue is the indefinite on-site storage of spent-fuel rods in cooling ponds. As we witnessed in Fukushima, a loss of power or damage to the coolant system can quickly result in these rods melting and catching fire, spreading dangerous radionuclides away from the reactor site downwind throughout populated areas. The staff of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission have identified the transition of more spent-fuel rods into dry cask storage throughout the U.S. reactor fleet as worthy of further examination. I ask you, however, to consider special attention to accelerating this transfer for the Mark I reactors at the earliest possible opportunity.

As we saw at Fukushima, the elevated spent-fuel cooling pools within the reactor building were susceptible to loss of coolant with the loss of power; desperate workers were attempting to shoot water into these pools (exposed by the destruction of the surrounding

The President

January 27, 2012


Page Two

building by explosions from the build-up of hydrogen) by arcing streams of water from common fire-trucks. I understand that the pools in many of the U.S. Mark I reactors are nearing capacity and contain more spent-fuel rod bundles than were present in the Fukushima reactor buildings.

I would also request that you direct your Administration to review the study issued last month by the French nuclear safety authority, ASN, on the enhanced safety measures that France should undertake regarding its power reactors. One measure is to store emergency safety equipment not only offsite, but within their own protective bunkers, to withstand whatever natural or artificial calamity that would require them in the first place. In addition, the French Government will set up specialized emergency response teams, composed of personnel trained and immediately available to assist in any reactor crisis situation throughout the country. Both of these actions strike me as exactly what the United States should be doing to enhance the safety of the entire U.S. reactor fleet, and the Mark I's in particular.

I'm sure you've seen in the events of Fukushima, as I have, the potential for similar dislocation and threats to public health in our country. Such an occurrence would mean the end of nuclear power in the United States. We should act quickly to ensure that the Mark I reactors do not become a serious threat to the American people.

Sincerely,



HOWARD L. BERMAN
Ranking Member

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON, DC 20502



**DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
ATTN: EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT
ROOM 7E054
1000 INDEPENDENCE AVENUE, SW
WASHINGTON, DC 20585**

**THE WHITE HOUSE OFFICE
REFERRAL**

May 30, 2012

TO: NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

ACTION COMMENTS:

ACTION REQUESTED: DIRECT REPLY W/COPY

REFERRAL COMMENTS:

ID: 1082296

MEDIA: LETTER

DOCUMENT DATE: January 27, 2012

TO: PRESIDENT OBAMA

FROM: THE HONORABLE HOWARD BERMAN
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, DC 20515

SUBJECT: EXPRESSES CONCERN REGARDING THE SAFETY OF THE 23 MARK I BOILING
WATER REACTORS OPERATING IN THE U.S.

COMMENTS:

PROMPT ACTION IS ESSENTIAL -- IF REQUIRED ACTION HAS NOT BEEN TAKEN WITHIN 9 WORKING DAYS OF RECEIPT,
UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED, PLEASE TELEPHONE THE UNDERSIGNED AT (202) 456-2590.

RETURN ORIGINAL CORRESPONDENCE, WORKSHEET AND COPY OF RESPONSE (OR DRAFT) TO: DOCUMENT TRACKING UNIT,
ROOM 63, OFFICE OF RECORDS MANAGEMENT - THE WHITE HOUSE, 20500
FAX A COPY OF REPOSENSE TO: (202) 456-5881

**THE WHITE HOUSE
DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT AND
TRACKING WORKSHEET**



DATE RECEIVED: April 25, 2012

CASE ID: 1082296

NAME OF CORRESPONDENT: THE HONORABLE HOWARD BERMAN

SUBJECT: EXPRESSES CONCERN REGARDING THE SAFETY OF THE 23 MARK I BOILING WATER REACTORS OPERATING IN THE U.S.

ROUTE TO: AGENCY/OFFICE	(STAFF NAME)	ACTION		DISPOSITION	
		CODE	DATE	TYPE RESPONSE	CODE
LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS	ROB NABORS	ORG	04/26/2012		

ACTION COMMENTS:

ENERGY *R 5/1/12 NRN C 5/22/12*

ACTION COMMENTS:

See referral comments

NRN

R

ACTION COMMENTS:

ACTION COMMENTS:

ACTION COMMENTS:

COMMENTS:

MEDIA TYPE: LETTER

USER CODE:

ACTION CODES	DISPOSITION		
	TYPE RESPONSE	DISPOSITION CODES	COMPLETED DATE
A = APPROPRIATE ACTION B = RESEARCH AND REPORT BACK D = DRAFT RESPONSE I = INFO COPY/NO ACT NECESSARY R = DIRECT REPLY W/ COPY ORG = ORIGINATING OFFICE	INITIALS OF SIGNER (W.H. STAFF) NRN = NO RESPONSE NEEDED OTBE = OVERTAKEN BY EVENTS	A = ANSWERED OR ACKNOWLEDGED C = CLOSED X = INTERIM REPLY	DATE OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OR CLOSEOUT DATE (MM/DD/YY)

KEEP THIS WORKSHEET ATTACHED TO THE ORIGINAL INCOMING LETTER AT ALL TIMES
REFER QUESTIONS TO DOCUMENT TRACKING UNIT (202)-456-2590
SEND ROUTING UPDATES AND COMPLETED RECORDS TO OFFICE OF RECORDS MANAGEMENT - DOCUMENT TRACKING UNIT ROOM 63, EEOB.

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EPA-2012-009192

2012 MAY 01 10:19

**THE WHITE HOUSE OFFICE
REFERRAL**

May 01, 2012

TO: DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

ACTION COMMENTS:

ACTION REQUESTED: DIRECT REPLY W/COPY

REFERRAL COMMENTS:

DESCRIPTION OF INCOMING:

ID: 1082296

MEDIA: LETTER

DOCUMENT DATE: January 27, 2012

TO: PRESIDENT OBAMA

FROM: THE HONORABLE HOWARD BERMAN
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, DC 20515

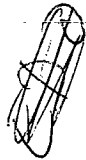
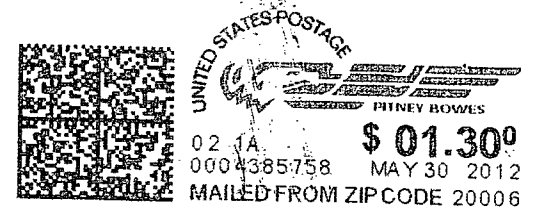
SUBJECT: EXPRESSES CONCERN REGARDING THE SAFETY OF THE 23 MARK I BOILING
WATER REACTORS OPERATING IN THE U.S.

COMMENTS: Contents falls within the purview of NRC

PROMPT ACTION IS ESSENTIAL -- IF REQUIRED ACTION HAS NOT BEEN TAKEN WITHIN 9 WORKING DAYS OF RECEIPT,
UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED, PLEASE TELEPHONE THE UNDERSIGNED AT (202) 456-2590.

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ROOM 63, OFFICE OF RECORDS MANAGEMENT - THE WHITE HOUSE, 20500
FAX A COPY OF REPOSENSE TO: (202) 456-5881

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON, DC 20502



U.S. Nuclear Regulatory
Commission
Washington, D.C. 20555
ATTN: EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT

0-1664