

September 14, 2012

Mr. Steve Dwyer
Geologic Consultant
E-mail: stexied@gmail.com

Dear Mr. Dwyer:

On behalf of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), I am responding to your e-mails to Chairman Macfarlane dated July 13, July 27, and August 30, 2012, in which you expressed concerns about seismic studies and seismic hazards for the San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station (SONGS), and also requested information about how to petition the agency.

Last year, in an e-mail to former Chairman Jaczko dated June 30, 2011, you expressed similar concerns about seismic hazards at SONGS. The NRC responded to you in an e-mail dated August 26, 2011. In that response, we discussed why the NRC does not believe that SONGS is vulnerable to a seismic event similar to the one that occurred near Fukushima. We also discussed the actions the NRC is taking to further assess seismic hazards for all U.S. nuclear power plants.

The NRC has directed all U.S. nuclear plants to address earthquake hazards as part of the lessons learned from the Fukushima Dai-ichi event in Japan. In March 2011, the NRC established a senior level agency Near-Term Task Force to conduct a methodical and systematic review of NRC processes and regulations to determine additional improvements that could be made to the agency's regulatory system. In October 2011, the NRC staff provided its proposed plan of action and prioritization of the task force recommendations, including actions addressing seismic hazards. That plan is publicly available in the NRC's Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS), at Accession No. ML11272A111, and on the NRC Web site at <http://www.nrc.gov/readingrm/doc-collections/commission/secys/2011/2011-0137scy.pdf>.

The agency has been proceeding to address all Tier 1 recommendations from the Near-Term Task Force report. Tier 1 recommendations are those recommendations which the NRC staff determined should be started without unnecessary delay. On March 12, 2012, the NRC issued three orders requiring nuclear power plants to implement safety enhancements related to (1) mitigating strategies to respond to extreme natural events resulting in the loss of electric power at plants, (2) ensuring reliable hardened containment vents (applicable only to boiling water reactors with Mark 1 or Mark 2 containments), and (3) enhancing spent fuel pool instrumentation. All operating nuclear power plants are required to begin implementation of the safety enhancements and to complete implementation within two refueling outages, or by December 31, 2016, whichever comes first. In addition, the NRC issued a formal request for information to all operating reactor licensees to (1) reevaluate seismic and flooding hazards (including tsunami hazards) at their sites using applicable current methods and information, (2) conduct walkdowns of their facilities to ensure protection against the hazards in their current design basis, and (3) reevaluate their emergency communications systems and staffing levels.

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The NRC will evaluate Southern California Edison's response to the request for information in determining the need for plant modifications or further enhancements to address seismic and flooding hazards at SONGS. These orders and requests for information, as well as other information on the agency's response to the Fukushima event, are accessible on the NRC Web site at <http://www.nrc.gov/reactors/operating/ops-experience/japan-info.html>.

Title 10 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (10 CFR), Section 2.206, allows the public to petition the NRC to take enforcement action, such as to modify, suspend, or revoke a license. You may find more information on the 2.206 process on the NRC's public Web site at <http://www.nrc.gov/about-nrc/regulatory/enforcement/petition.html>.

Thank you for contacting the NRC with your concerns.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Douglas A. Broaddus, Chief
San Onofre Special Projects Branch
Division of Operating Reactor Licensing
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

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Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

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