

September 20, 2012

Jim Willard  
Ben Franklin Station  
P.O. Box 7892  
Washington, D.C. 20044-7892

Dear Mr. Willard:

I am responding to your letter to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) Chairman dated August 15, 2012.

First I would like to thank you for your interest in nuclear safety. As you know, fuel element irradiation growth and the potential for failures during operation is an important consideration for the safe nuclear power plant operation. As such, it is also important to the NRC. My staff carefully evaluates the potential for fuel rod growth in NRC licensing reviews. The NRC staff review guidance for irradiation growth can be found in NUREG-0800 titled "Standard Review Plan for the Review of Safety Analysis Reports for Nuclear Power Plants: LWR [Light-water Reactor] Edition," Chapter 4 "Reactors," Section 4.2 "Fuel System Design." This guidance can be found on the internet at <http://pbadupws.nrc.gov/docs/ML0707/ML070740002.pdf>.

With regard to floating radioactive debris from Fukushima, the National Response Framework Nuclear Radiological Incident Annex identifies two organizations responsible for hazardous materials that reach US shores or waters from outside of the United States. If the hazardous material (in this case radioactive materials) is in certain areas of the coastal zone in the United States the U.S. Coast Guard coordinates Federal response (which includes cleanup), in all other areas of the U.S. and U.S. territories the Environmental Protection Agency is responsible for coordinating the Federal response. Both of these agencies are already well aware of the potential issues with Fukushima and the Great Eastern Japan Earthquake and Tsunami. These agencies are monitoring the situation.

Thank you again for your interest in nuclear safety.

Sincerely,

*/RA/*

Jack Davis, Deputy Director  
Division of Safety Systems  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

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Jack Davis, Deputy Director  
Division of Safety Systems  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

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