

July 31, 2013

The Honorable Harry Reid  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Reid:

On behalf of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), I am responding to your letter of June 18, 2013, forwarding correspondence from your constituent, Alfredo Hannenberg. Mr. Hannenberg expressed concern that the Fort Calhoun Station north of Omaha, Nebraska could be subject to heavy river flooding from the north combined with the effects of a hurricane raising river levels to the south.

Like all nuclear power plants, Fort Calhoun was designed to withstand the maximum probable flood expected for the site. This calculation is based on both historical data and projected conditions for the area around the power plant site. This calculation accounts for all potential flood-hazard mechanisms, including consideration of coincident events, although not the specific scenario Mr. Hannenberg cited. The conservative nature with which the design basis was developed provides the NRC with reasonable assurance that flooding at the site has been adequately accounted for. As an example, in 2011, even with the melting of record winter snowfalls combined with heavier than normal spring rains, Fort Calhoun was able to withstand severe flooding with no major impacts to safety equipment.

As Mr. Hannenberg noted, the NRC has been applying lessons learned from the events at Fukushima Dai-ichi to U.S. nuclear power plants. As a result, all plants have been directed to reevaluate their flooding hazards. The NRC issued letters to all reactors on March 12, 2012, requesting that licensees reevaluate the flooding and seismic hazards at their site using the most current information available. Fort Calhoun was directed to submit its flood hazards reevaluation by March 12, 2014. You may find more information regarding the flooding reevaluations on the NRC public website page addressing implementation of the lessons-learned from Japan, <http://www.nrc.gov/reactors/operating/ops-experience/japan-dashboard.html>.

If you need any additional information, please contact me or Rebecca Schmidt, Director of the Office of Congressional Affairs, at (301) 415-1776.

Sincerely,

*/RA/*

R. W. Borchardt  
Executive Director  
for Operation

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Executive Director  
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