Docket No. 50-287

MAR 9 1977

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L. Clovis Hirning, M.D.
RFD #1, Box 205
Katonak, New York 10536

Dear Dr. Hirning:

We are pleased to respond to your letter dated February 16, 1977, in which you indicated a concern about radioactive iodine 131 contaminating the Clemson, South Carolina, drinking water.

The incident to which you refer in your letter is a recent release of radioactivity into the Keowee River from the Oconee Nuclear Station. The Keowee River feeds into Lake Hartwell. Water samples taken in a timely manner following the release indicated that radioactivity in the river at the nearest drinking water station posed no threat to public health and safety.

This incident was investigated by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) Inspection and Enforcement personnel whose findings support the conclusions of the State of South Carolina and Duke Power Company that the effect of this event on public health was insignificantly small.

In regard to your concern that the situation was initially "hushed up", we have no evidence that this was the case.

Your letter asks about getting in touch with the President on this matter. In view of the fact that this release was promptly investigated and that the measurements taken of the drinking water demonstrated that it did not constitute a threat to the health and safety of the public, we do not feel this matter warrants his personal attention.

Let me assure you that we do not lightly dismiss instances of unplanned radioactive releases from nuclear plants. We are examining the causes of this particular release with the licensee, Duke Power Company, with the objective of reducing the likelihood of future occurrences of this nature.

Sincerely,

Original signed by

A. Schwencer, Chief
Operating Reactors Branch #1
Division of Operating Reactors

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St. 1
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SURNAME	DNeighbors:lb	ASchwencer	KRGoller			
DATE	3/7/77	3/ /77	3/ /77			

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MAILING ADDRESS
~~BOX 180~~ RFD. 1 Box 205
KATONAH, N. Y. 10536

February 16th 1977

Oconee

Nuclear Regulatory Commission,
Washington, D.C.

To Whom It May Concern:

The enclosed copy of an article in today's N.Y. Times speaks for itself. I am writing because my wife and I are planning a trip to visit our daughter and granddaughter in CLEMSON, South Carolina. We are disquieted by what we hear from our daughter and son-in-law (our granddaughter is only two years old) about what has happened to the Clemson water supply from Lake HARTWELL.

It has come out that due to an unfortunate "inadvertency" Iodine 131 has been found to have contaminated the Clemson water supply. The situation was apparently initially "hushed up" but has since come out in the local newspapers including the Greenville paper and the Seneca JOURNAL, and the role of the DUKE POWER COMPANY.

We will not be leaving until later in March so that there should be ample time for us to hear from you regarding this matter.

In view of the President's concern with the problem of nuclear fuel sources, would it be a good idea to get in touch with him? Please advise. Of course, in case we do not hear from you, we will appeal to him as a next step.

Thank you for giving this matter your attention.

Sincerely yours,

L. Clovis Hirning M.D.

L. Clovis Hirning, M.D. F.A.P.A.

N.Y. Times Feb 16, 1977
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CONNECTICUT SCORED ON NUCLEAR SAFETY

Panel Asserts Radiation Hazards and Peril of Sabotage May Have Been Understated in Studies

By LAWRENCE FELLOWS
Special to The New York Times

HARTFORD, Feb. 15—An eight-member panel that visited nuclear installations in the state says that the latent hazards of radiation posed by such plants may have been understated by studies on the subject. And it called for the establishment of an agency independent of the utilities to check the plants regularly for possibly hazardous operations.

In a report to the state's General Assembly, the panel, which was appointed a year ago, also said that the dangers of sabotage and of the malfunction of critical safety systems in nuclear power plants might also have been understated.

The Reactor Safety Study, the standard work on the subject, which was published late in 1975 by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, concluded that the dangers inherent in the operation of nuclear power plants were less than those in most human activities.

But having found the Federal study weak in the specifics it brought to the Assembly's notice, the Connecticut panel, called the Temporary Nuclear Power Evaluation Council, suggested that the Federal Government might be underestimating accident probabilities based on material in the Reactor Safety Study.

Differing Reports Cited

Doubts spread among the eight members of the council when they were given widely differing reports on their own exposure to radiation.

Four of the eight members added their own misgivings even about the report they were submitting to the General Assembly, for some of the shortcuts in thoroughness or logic they thought they perceived. One of these points arose in a discussion that compared radiation effects on workers in nuclear plants and deaths attributable to coal mining, without also mentioning the people who lost their lives mining uranium.

The plants are audited now by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, although that Federal agency normally does not have the people to do more than review the utility's own inspection of its nuclear installations, the council reported.

"As long as the industry acts as its own policeman, there will always remain a question relating to the adequacy of the quality of plan: design and components," the council said.

Three Plants in State

Connecticut has three nuclear power plants: Connecticut Yankee in Haddam, on the Connecticut River; and Millstone I and Millstone II at Waterford, on Long Island Sound. Millstone III at Waterford is expected to be in service in 1982.

More than half the electricity used in Connecticut is generated in the three operational nuclear plants. About 12 percent of Connecticut's power needs is supplied by the nuclear plants.

Because of the expansion in nuclear capacity that can be expected in the future, and the widened hazards, the state should pursue energy conservation and look for other sources of energy as alternatives to expanding nuclear power, the council suggested.

The council members are:

Charles G. Karanian, a lawyer and the council chairman.

Barbara F. Bass of the Connecticut Lung Association.

Thomas F. D'Muhala, president of the Nuclear Technology Corporation.

Richard H. Goodwin, professor emeritus of botany at Connecticut College.

Paul Haake, a chemistry professor at Wesleyan.

Gifford B. Pinchot, a physician and former biology professor at Johns Hopkins University.

Carlos Stern, associate professor of environmental economics at the University of Connecticut.

Dale Van Winkle, a lawyer and vice president of United Technologies.