

D870916

The Honorable Lando W. Zech, Jr.
Chairman
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D.C. 20555

Dear Chairman Zech:

SUBJECT: ACRS COMMENTS ON DEVELOPMENTS IN EMERGENCY PLANNING

During the 329th meeting of the ACRS, September 10-12, 1987, we met with representatives of the New York Power Authority, the Oak Ridge Associated Universities, and the Sandia National Laboratories to discuss preliminary analyses of the benefits of various measures taken to protect the population in case of a major accident at a nuclear power plant. Representatives of the NRC Staff took part in the discussion. This matter was also the subject of a meeting of our Subcommittee on Occupational and Environmental Radiation Protection Systems held on June 22-23, 1987.

Studies reported by these groups indicate that sheltering, followed by monitoring of radiation exposure rates and relocation of populations from affected high radiation areas, within 4 to 8 hours after an accident, yields predictions for the number of prompt fatalities lower than those estimated to be provided by the evacuation expected under current decision-making practices. This was the statistical result of a wide range of accident scenarios. Since the number of people, the distance they would need to be moved, and the disruptive impact of the sheltering-relocation approach would normally be less than those for the immediate evacuation approach, we believe that the NRC Staff should be asked to conduct an independent and prompt assessment of these findings. Should this assessment confirm the reported observations, there appears to be reason for emphasizing sheltering, where appropriate, in nuclear emergency response.

Sincerely,

William Kerr
Chairman

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