

MAR 22 1978

Docket Nos. 50-275  
and 50-323 ✓

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The Honorable Robert J. Lagomarsino  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Congressman Lagomarsino:

I am pleased to respond to the February 23, 1978 letter from Dennis Morris regarding the Diablo Canyon Nuclear Generating Station. The Diablo Canyon Nuclear Generating Station is currently under NRC review for an operating license for its two units; the facility is located in San Luis Obispo County and is approximately 14 miles from Pismo Beach, California.

Mr. Morris asked about the distance that the Diablo Canyon facility was from the San Andreas fault, and if such a close proximity was hazardous. He also inquired about the impact that the warm water discharge from the cooling system might have on the marine environment. Let me answer these questions in the paragraphs below.

First of all, the Diablo Canyon Nuclear Generating Station is located approximately 48 miles from the San Andreas fault line. Although this large fault line is located quite a distance from the facility, there are other smaller faults closer to the site. For example, the Nacimiento fault is approximately 20 miles away, and an offshore extension of the Santa Ynez fault is approximately 50 miles from the facility. The closest fault is the Hosgri, which is a lesser fault located approximately three miles from Diablo Canyon. I would like to add that the abundance of earthquake faults near this site is not significantly different from other coastal California locations. Seismically speaking, the Far West -- and especially California -- is relatively young, and therefore minor earthquake faults are fairly common.

From a safety standpoint, we look very closely at the possibility of an earthquake near Diablo Canyon. The facility is currently being re-designed and built to withstand a very large earthquake occurring at the nearest significant fault. The redesign of the facility is a topic of a public hearing to be held this fall. All concerns on this topic will be heard at this hearing, and the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board will take into consideration all views prior to making their decision on whether or not to grant the operating licenses. In summary, the NRC intends to allow Diablo Canyon to operate only if we are convinced that it can operate safely.

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The Honorable Robert J. Lagomarsino - 2 -

Mr. Morris' second question dealt with the impacts of the cooling water on the marine life near the facility. To give him a complete answer, I've enclosed a copy of the final environmental statement (FES) for the Diablo Canyon facility, and the addendum to the FES. These two documents address other impacts of the facility upon the environment, as well as the marine impacts.

Within the FES, Section 2.7.2 discusses the marine environment near Diablo Canyon, Section 3.3.3 discusses the temperature increase and discharge from the cooling system, and Section 5.3.2 addresses the environmental impacts resulting from the discharged warm water. The addendum to the FES gives updated information on these subjects; you may want to look particularly at Sections 2.7.2, 3.3.3, and 5.3.2. I think that Mr. Morris will find these reports quite informative; they look in detail at the marine environment both "before and after" the Diablo Canyon facility.

I hope that the above comments and the enclosed information are responsive to your needs. We appreciate the opportunity to respond, and hope that you will feel free to contact us if any additional information is needed.

Sincerely,

(Signed) William J. Dircks

William J. Dircks  
Assistant Executive Director  
for Operations

Enclosures:

1. Diablo Canyon FES
2. Addendum to Diablo Canyon FES

          
          
          
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