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NOV 30 1978

Docket Nos. 50-275  
and 50-323

Ms. Ellyn Murphy  
5524 Murphy Motor Way  
Malibu, CA 90265

Dear Ms. Murphy:

This is in response to your letter of October 30, 1978, in which you bring up several concerns about the Diablo Canyon and Sundesert nuclear reactors.

With regard to your question about the Hosgri fault, this feature has been reviewed extensively by the staff over the last five years. The results are described in Supplements 1, 5, 6, 7 and 8 to the Safety Evaluation Report for Diablo Canyon. These supplements are available for your inspection at the local Public Document Room at San Luis Obispo County Free Library, P.O. Box X, San Luis Obispo, California.

As a result of these examinations, the plant has been extensively modified to upgrade the seismic design for a more severe earthquake. The seismic considerations are summarized and the plant modifications described in Supplement 7, a copy of which is enclosed.

You next inquire about the effect of advances in solar and conservation technologies on electrical load projections. The staff expects these advances to result in some lowering of electrical demand, although factors such as the state of the economy and the price elasticity of electricity may have more important effects. However, the decision whether to operate the Diablo Canyon reactors after they are constructed will be made on the basis of operating costs, compared to those of existing plants. Fuel costs are a large component of operating costs, and nuclear fuel is cheaper than fossil fuel. Therefore, operating costs would be smaller for a nuclear plant than for one fired by fossil fuel.

*ENCLOSURE 2*

I will attempt to respond to the gist of your comments on the NEPA. There are, of course, sizable adverse environmental impacts associated with the construction and operation of any large power plant, whether nuclear or fossil-fired. In the Final Environmental Statement, these impacts were identified and weighed against the benefit to be derived from a large block of electrical energy. Further, the staff concluded that no alternative method for generating electricity would lead to

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smaller environmental costs. In recent environmental statements, the health effects of generating power from nuclear fuel and from coal are compared, taking into account the complete fuel cycle from mining to waste disposal. The nuclear health effects including those on miners and plant workers were determined to be smaller than the effects of the coal fuel cycle. The staff findings, therefore, do not support your concerns that the Diablo Canyon project "seems especially threatening to healthful life".

Enclosed is a notice of an evidentiary hearing on seismic issues to be held on December 4, 1978. The hearing will be held before a three-member Atomic Safety and Licensing Board chaired by an administrative law judge, Mrs. Elizabeth Bowers. The technical members are Dr. William E. Martin and Mr. Glenn O. Bright. The legal status of the NRC staff is as one of the parties presenting evidence to the Board.

I hope the remarks above have been responsive to your concerns. We appreciate your interest in nuclear issues and shall be pleased to answer any further questions you may have about the reactor licensing process.

Sincerely yours,

*ja* *SI Robert P. Becker*  
Ronald L. Ballard, Chief  
Environmental Projects Branch 1  
Division of Site Safety  
and Environmental Analysis

Enclosures:  
As stated

Record Note: This information was telephoned to Ms. Murphy  
11/30/78.

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