50-323

SEP 6 1973

Honorable Alan Cranston
United States Senate

Dear Senator Cranston:

We are pleased to respond to your request regarding concerns expressed by your constituent, Mrs. Araminta B. Snyder, in her letter to you of August 14, 1973.

The Atomic Energy Commission (AEC), in its review of applications for licenses to construct and operate nuclear power plants, is required by the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended, to consider those measures necessary for protection of the health and safety of the public. To carry out this responsibility, the Regulatory staff of the AEC conducts a detailed review of all nuclear plant applications to assure that they can be built and operated at the proposed locations without undue risk to the health and safety of the public. This includes assuring that all structures, systems and components important to safety will be designed and constructed to withstand the effects of various postulated environmental phenomena. Additionally, to provide reasonable assurance that facilities can be operated without undue risk to the health and safety of the public, the AEC has established minimum requirements for the principal design criteria for water-cooled nuclear power plants. A copy of these General Design Criteria for Nuclear Power Plants is enclosed. Furthermore, under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), the AEC is required to perform an evaluation of the potential environmental impact of proposed nuclear power plants and balance the benefits derived against possible risk to the environment. As with everything else, there is always some risk, no matter how small, in all human activities. The AEC regulatory process is designed to assure that the most advanced procedures of science and technology are used to protect the public and thereby minimize risk. The AEC's regulatory process and safety philosophy are discussed in more detail in the enclosed copy of remarks of the Director of Regulation, L. Manning Muntzing.

In response to some of Mrs. Snyder's more specific comments, all documents, reports, correspondence, etc., concerning any application to build a nuclear power plant are a matter of public record. In the case of Diablo Canyon, this information is all on file in our Public Document Room in Washington, D. C. and at the San Luis Obispo County Free Library, 1354 Bishop Street, San Luis Obispo, California 93401. Any one may examine and make copies of any of this information at these locations.

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The Diablo Canyon plant, mentioned in Mrs. Snyder's letter, is still under construction and will not be ready for operation for about 1½ years. On July 16, 1973, Pacific Gas and Electric submitted an application to us to operate Units 1 and 2 of the Diablo Canyon plant. Copies of this application are on file in the Public Document Rooms mentioned above. We will review this application in great detail before a decision is made whether to grant an operating license for this plant.

With regard to the disposal and monitoring of radioactive wastes at the Diablo Canyon site, I have included a copy of the Final Environmental Statement relating to Units 1 and 2 of the Diablo Canyon Nuclear Generating Station. This Statement was issued by the Atomic Energy Commission in May, 1973, and reports our findings on the potential environmental effects of construction and operation of the Diablo Canyon plant. Section 3.4 of this Statement describes the radioactive waste system that will be a part of the Diablo Canyon plant. As discussed in this Statement, the levels of radioactivity that may be present in liquid and gaseous effluents during operation of the plant will be in accordance with the Commission's regulations, as set forth in 10 CFR (Code of Federal Regulations) parts 20 and 50. Chapter 6 of this Final Environmental Statement describes the environmental monitoring program associated with the plant.

Other items referred to in Mrs. Snyder's letter are the plant at Morro Bay, air and soil conditions in the vicinity of the Stanford Linear Accelerator, and some 1971 articles published by the Santa Maria publishing company concerning possible dangers of missiles. The Morro Bay power plant is a fossil fuel fired plant which does not come under the authority of the Atomic Energy Commission. The Stanford Linear Accelerator Laboratory does monitor for radioactivity in the air and in the areas surrounding the facility. Detailed reports on the results of these monitoring programs are available for public inspection at the San Francisco Operations Office of the Atomic Energy Commission, 1333 Broadway in Oakland. Finally, the articles published by the Santa Maria publishing company were not included with Mrs. Snyder's letter, so I cannot comment on their contents.

I hope that this information will be of assistance in replying to the concerns expressed in Mrs. Snyder's letter. As you requested, we are returning Mrs. Snyder's letter.

Sincerely,

Original Signed By
A. Giambusso

A. Giambusso, Deputy Director
~~for Reactor Projects~~
Directorate of Licensing

Enclosures: See page 3

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Enclosures:
1. General Design Criteria for Nuclear Power Plants
2. Federal Regulations of Nuclear Power Plants
3. Final Environmental Statement
4. Incoming Letter dtd. 8/14/73

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