

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

October 7, 1982

To: Congressional Liaison
Nuclear Regulatory Commission
1717 H Street, N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20555

Enclosure From: Mr. Carl F. Mansfield
235 Machado Lane
San Luis Obispo, California 93401

Re: Please respond in detail to constituent's concerns expressed
in letter re the pipes, bolts and studs of the cooling
system at Diablo Canyon.

I forward the attached for your consideration.

Your report, in duplicate, along with the return of the enclosure
will be appreciated.

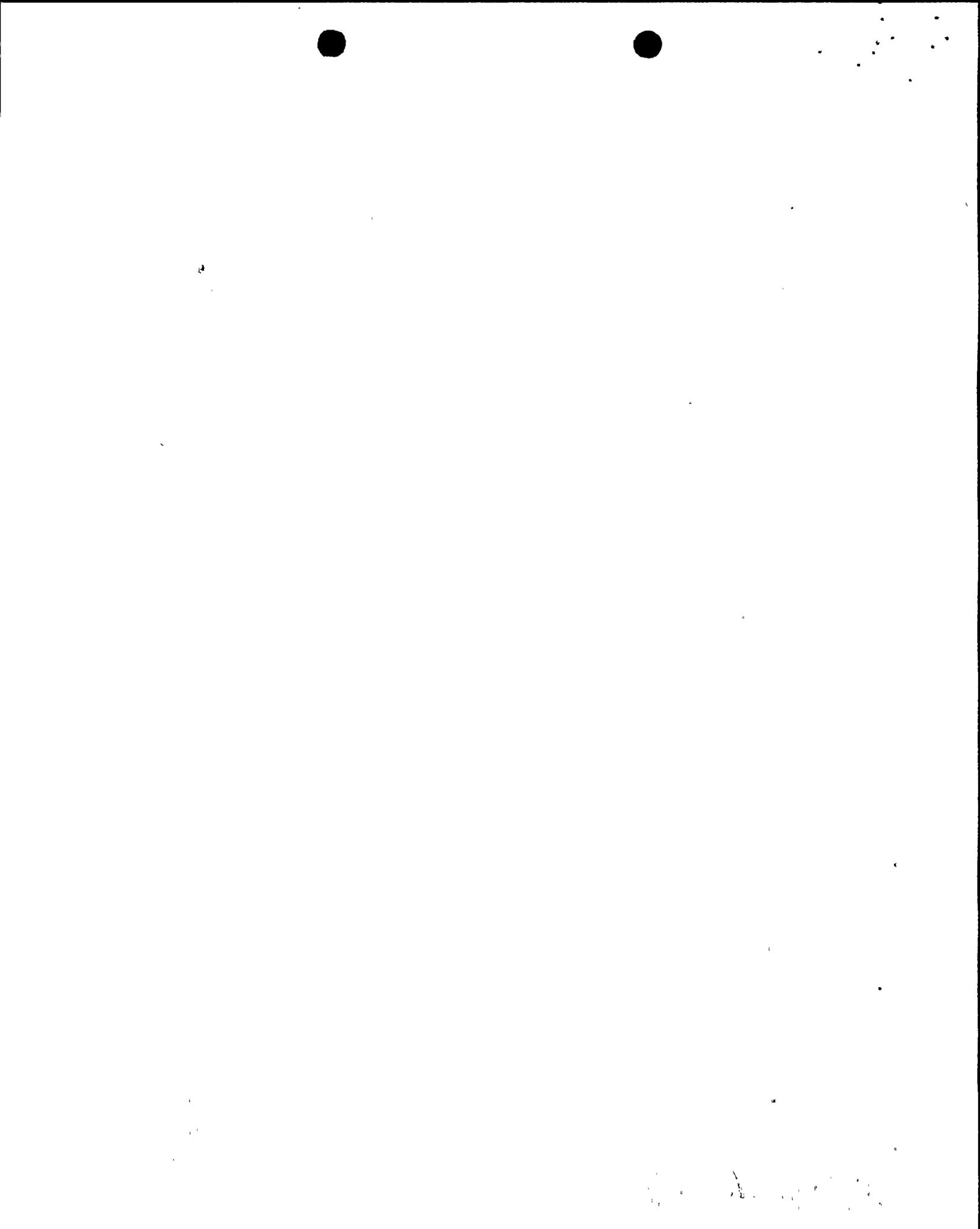
Sincerely,

Alan Cranston
Alan Cranston

Please address envelope to:

Senator Alan Cranston
229 Russell Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20510

Attn: Emily Thurber



Dear Sir

COLA COMB 66
5/12/82

Thank you for your recent letter. I would like to reply by projecting the latest changes on two topics in which you have shown great interest.

① One is federal retirees annuities. They are now seriously threatened by what I like to call the Reagan-Dominici-OPM combination of financial K.O. punches.

The Reagan formula pegs COLA to either the cost of living or any federal pay increase, whichever is lower. Sen. Dominici proposes a freeze of federal pay. Result: with the lower COLA peg fixed at zero, COLA becomes zero-- for all federal retirees.

The OPM revision of federal health plans-- higher premiums, higher deductibles, lower benefits -- mean a sharp increase of medical costs. At the same time, the Dominici plan provides for medical costs to be deductible from U.S. income tax only to the extent they exceed 10 per cent of AGI, as against the three per cent heretofore.

Under the Dominici plan also, time payment interest on consumer items as well as state and local sales taxes shall no longer be deductible from the federal income tax. The proviso is bound to hit cash-poor retirees especially hard.

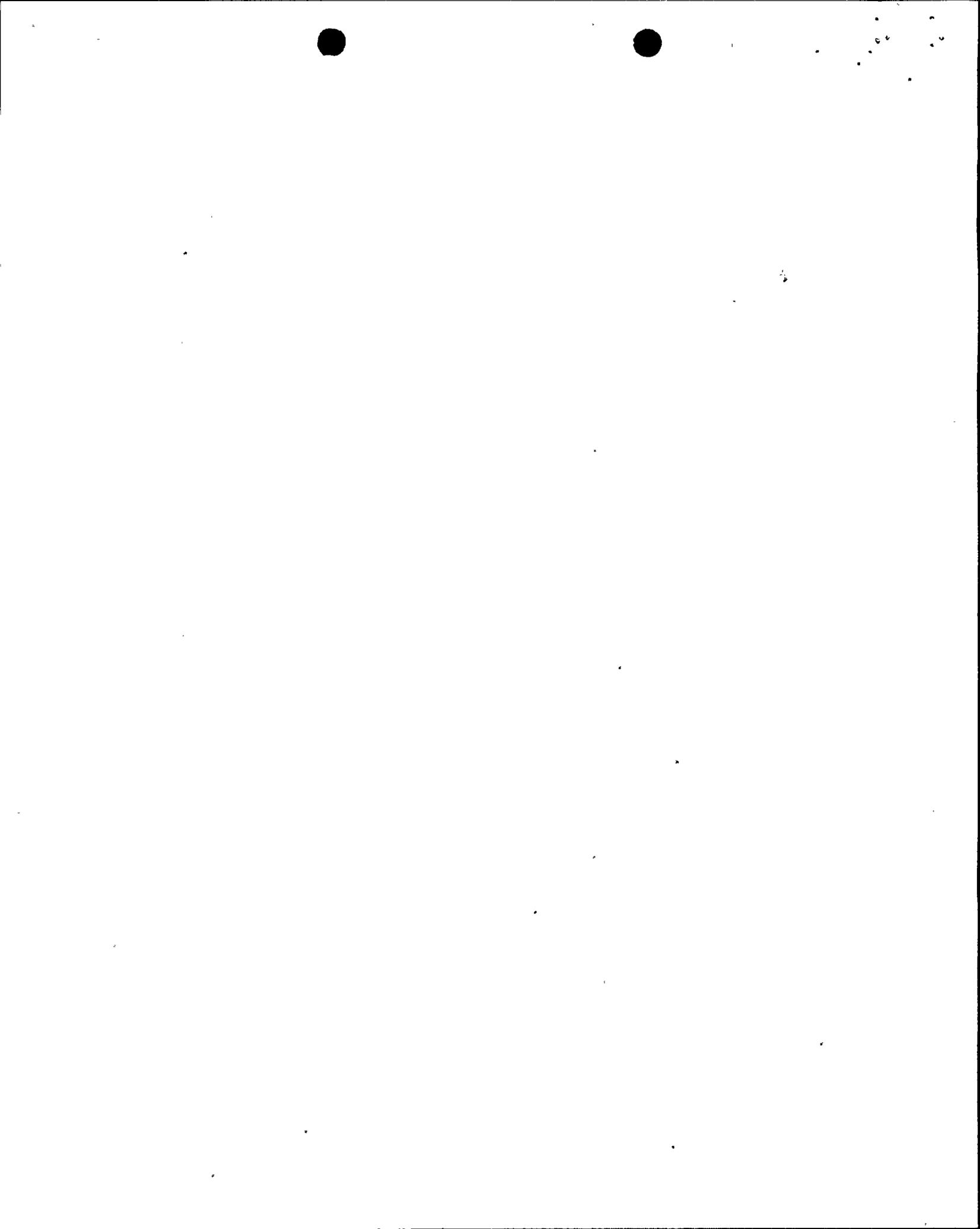
This is rank discrimination. No other group of retirees is singled out to suffer similar inroads in their life standards and health. With Social Security's COLA and tax freedom untouched, federal retirees ought to be freed from taxation of their annuities or not at all subjected to such undeserved discriminatory penalties. They differ from other retirees only by having worked not for a private employer but for the government that is now turning on them, and doing so without economic or fiscal benefit to anyone.

Cutting their spending money means cutting a slice out of the national spending power aggregate and reducing the Treasury's tax revenues, not exactly contributions to economic recovery. At any rate, compared to the many billions of dollars borrowed by big business for tax leasing instead of plant modernization, what retirees are supposed to contribute to economic and fiscal betterment is insignificant. To put it another way, it is a bitter, harmful, and yet ineffective medicine administered for political gain because "giving it to the bureaucrats" is considered popular and vote-producing.

② The other situation like-wise greatly changed by recent developments is that of the Diablo Canyon nuclear plant near San Luis Obispo. The two recent warnings sent by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to the operators of the Diablo Canyon type Westinghouse Pressurized Water reactors render the long debate about the plant's seismic tolerance almost moot and prove the plant far more unsafe than safe. I fear this has been little noted so far.

The NRC warnings said that the pipes of the primary cooling system, carrying, as you know, highly radioactive water, have been found to break and leak long before their design-time. The NRC called the problem "virtually irreparable" and predicted that "multiple breaks" would lead to insufficient reactor cooling and melting of the uranium fuel.

The second warning said that bolts and studs are also subject to the same premature weakening that has caused leaks in a number of the 47 plants affected.



The pipe problem has caused 40 such nuclear plants to plug 20,000 primary loop pipes, and run on reduced capacity. Other plants sought to save 6,600 pipes by using sleeves at weak spots.

You will also recall that at TMI and Gina valves on the same pipes malfunctioned which is recognized as a problem connected with the two warned-against by the NRC.

Projected on Diablo Canyon's precarious seismic location, this situation, as yet of unknown cause, can only mean one thing: even an earthquake of less than the 7.5 critical magnitude would be able to lead to "multiple breaks" because pipes were weakened beforehand by premature aging, without seismic help. This is what makes the long debate about Diablo's seismic safety almost moot. The question now is whether the plant can withstand any except the most modest quakes, and how much pipe-whip and groundmotion is necessary to break pipes, bolts and studs already weakened by what is suspected to be a combined effect of radiation and pressure in the primary loop.

The NRC is legally charged with ascertaining that a nuclear plant is safe before issuing an operating license. At Diablo Canyon more than 100 defects in design and construction have now been reported to the NRC by PG&E. The pipes' aging problem has been characterized as meaning the proper material for primary loop pipes has yet to be found. The other defects found at Diablo Canyon have yet to be resolved if that is possible. In other words, the plant's safety has not been proved but has been disproved to a degree that should make licensing impossible and illegal.

Carl F. Mansfield

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