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January 6, 1966

J. D. Bond, Esq., Chairman  
Atomic Safety and Licensing Board  
on Dresden II  
Atomic Energy Commission  
Germantown, Maryland

Subject: Public Hearing of December 7 on Dresden II  
at Morris, Illinois

50-737

Dear Mr. Bond:

I feel obliged to express my deep concern over the conduct of the public hearing on the application of Commonwealth Edison Company of Chicago for a permit to build a second atomic power unit at its Dresden plant.

At that hearing, as you may recall, you granted me permission to enter the proceedings in a "limited appearance." As an independent consulting engineer my appearance was motivated solely by my sense of professional responsibility and by my ethical commitment to serve the public interest on a very important issue, namely, the question of authorizing construction of an atomic power plant with a disaster potential of unprecedented magnitude.

I believe I can cite adequate published support by professional colleagues regarding my competence to discuss certain problems of public safety and corporate responsibility about which I am particularly concerned. These are of extreme importance and I am not alone in expressing such anxiety.

In retrospect, I am deeply troubled by the lack of judicial consideration given to my appearance. To prepare for such an appearance required considerable time and expense. I believe I had something important to offer from the point of view of the public's interest and its safety. Instead, however, I found myself confronted with a question about consuming valuable time if I were to make an oral presentation.

Although I had hoped to appear as an interested member of the public and as a concerned citizen, I was obliged to first seek permission from the counsels representing the Atomic Energy Commission and

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Commonwealth Edison Company. I was also instructed to deliver copies of my prepared statement to your Board and to both counsels for examination during the noon recess. Immediately after reconvening, both counsels declared that they had no objection to my statement being admitted to the record, whereupon it was so ordered by the chairman without further discussion, and he proceeded at once to other matters. The people attending the hearing had no opportunity to hear my statement.

*4 - agreed*

I have taken some time to reflect on this strange and unique experience. Certainly, it was not a public hearing of the community type where the citizens have an opportunity to become informed, to raise questions or to express their views. Apparently the word "public" meant that the doors to this hearing were not locked. Furthermore, the conduct of the hearing was far removed from the practices of truly adversary proceedings.

*Just like any judicial proceeding*

The hearing was held in Morris, Illinois, quite some distance from Chicago and from the metropolitan center where most of the citizens with some competence in these complex matters are located. Unfortunately, the distance apparently discouraged the press from covering this important hearing, judging by the brief stories carried by the newspapers.

It is, of course, not feasible to comment here on the limitations in the technical testimony presented at this hearing. Presumably the objective of these strange proceedings was to contribute to the advancement of the revolutionary but terribly dangerous technology in atomic power. But let us not forget that advancement along sound lines can be achieved only where there is freedom for critical debate, along with an overriding consideration of the public's interest and safety.

I must confess that it was rather impressive to see the proceedings take place in an American courtroom, with our flag standing near the judge's bench as a constant reminder of our duty. The rude awakening came later with the agonizing feeling that here was a demonstration of how our traditional concepts of professional and corporate responsibility can be destroyed and how freedom and justice can be committed to a slow but certain death.

Sincerely yours,

*Adolph J. Ackerman*  
Adolph J. Ackerman

AJA:mjh

cc: Members of AS&L Board

Dr. Hugh Paxton, Los Alamos Scientific Lab., Los Alamos, New Mexico  
Dr. Eugene Greuling, Prof. of Physics, Duke Univ., Durham, N. Carolina

P.S. Just before mailing this letter I received a copy of your Board's "Initial Decision" of Dec. 29, 1965, authorizing construction of the Dresden II atomic power plant. In this order reference to my "limited appearance" has been conspicuously ignored.

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