

plants at those sites which have totally different foundation construction requirements.

In addition, I know that we cannot ignore the signals from natural phenomenon that occur such as the seiches on the Great Lakes which are caused by small earthquakes. For example, the Midland n-plant construction was located in the flood plain area of the Saginaw Valley. Its design criteria, as spelled out throughout the documents of both the utility and the NRC, was geared to the historic memory of a 100 year flood for this area--the same as that of the pumps and waste treatment facilities of the Dow Chemical Co. which are located immediately across the river. But in 1986, this area had a totally unexpected and unpredictable 500 year flood, that submerged the pumps of the Dow waste treatment facilities and, for the first time in its history, production at the Dow Chemical Co. was shut down because of a natural disaster. A news story at the time mentioned the fact that the pump area at the nuclear site was also completely submerged. If there had been an operating reactor there at the time, no pumps would have been operable for cooling. It could have been an overwhelming disaster for the Great Lakes.

Similarly, we cannot predict whether the small earthquakes that are known to occur in the Great Lakes may become much larger.

I am also enclosing a letter I wrote to Mr. R. Fenech of Consumers Power Co. in which I describe other concerns that some of us have with some aspects of the design of the VSC-24 cask. We need to have more verifiable information on these issues.

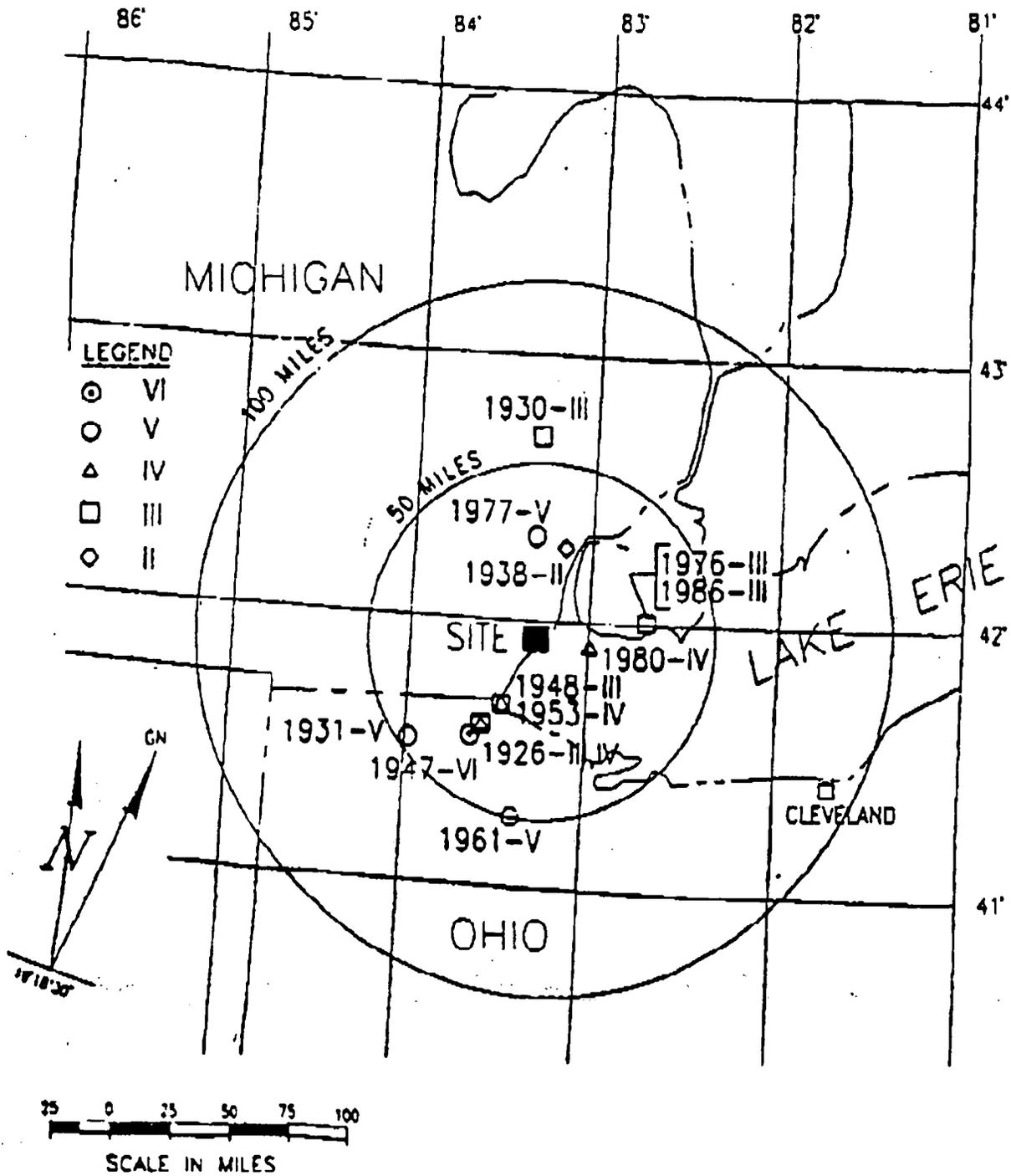
Your being sent to review the Palisades site was a wise and responsible move on the part of the NRC.

Yours sincerely,


Mary P. Sinclair, PhD.

cc. Dr. Ivan Selin, Chairman, NRC
John Zwolinski, NRC
Valdas Adamkus, EPA
Attorney General Frank Kelley
Senator Carl Levin
Senator Don Riegle
Congressman John Dingell
Congressman Dave Camp
Mr. Robert Fenech, Consumers Power Co.

HOPPER AND ASSOCIATES
ENGINEERS



Epicenter Map, Detroit Area, All Earthquakes, 50 Mile Radius

Figure 2.1.1.2

CALAMAZOO GAZETTE ■ SUNDAY, AUGUST 7, 1994

METRO & REGION



COMMENT

**BARBARA
WALTERS**

Confidence erodes about nuclear storage

In the sand, like jewels or fossils from some ancient civilization, they're all that remain of the house.

Bits of bright tile, asphalt broken to pieces and then sanded smooth, remains of foundation now have no identity now, beyond a rock you pick up casually on a walk along Lake Michigan, turn from side to side in your hand, and toss aside.

Just a decade ago, the house sat on the cliff above Lake Michigan about three miles south of the South Haven pier, somebody's dream home.

But these are the dune shores of Lake Michigan, at once as fragile and as powerful as anywhere on earth.

The winds breathe and the dunes sigh and shift, and the dreams of man that seemed so permanent shift with them.

One summer the house was whole.

The next, as the shoreline gradually changed, the kitchen of the house gaped open, half of its floor dangling down the cliff, the homely intimacy of a place where people had stood washing dishes and cooking summertime sweet corn violated.

In excruciating slow motion over the years as the walls fell, the place became a doll house, the lake and winds the casual player.

Timber and footings became debris. Whole walls clung to the cliff for whole summers, as if a new house could somehow grow there.

I keep thinking of that house every time another emergency develops at the Palisades Nuclear Plant, that we are assured does not endanger the public.

We've been assured that the cement platform on which nuclear waste is stored at Palisades is absolutely safe.

And for now, it probably is.

But I can't forget the house, or the feel of the sand slipping from under my feet as I've climbed up the dune, grabbing at the sand and laughing at how something so massive can be so fluid, so impermanent.

A few hundred feet away is waste so toxic that one scientist, a political conservative and the antithesis of an environmentalist, told me it would take 250,000 years — give or take a few tens of thousands — to recover if there was a leakage.

And there will be one, ultimately, unless the casks are moved.

That's up to the federal government, which has been as shifting as the sand in establishing a centralized place where states can store their nuclear waste.

If the feds delay, the casks could overheat, "welds will corrode" and "radioactive materials which remain hazardous for tens of thousands of years will eventually be released from the casks," a physicist and nuclear waste researcher warned in an affidavit released in March.

One colossal delay has already been announced, perhaps bumping any federal solution into the next century — unless the general public starts applying political pressure.

One of my favorite places is South Haven and the dunes that stretch south of it.

One of my favorite fables is about the emperor who wore no clothes.

His cronies had convinced him he was wearing silk so technically flawless that he couldn't see it. Only those who were very royal and very informed could perceive how marvelous he looked, they said.

Everybody saw he was naked. But they were filled with self-doubt and looked on silently as the emperor walked down the road, or was it a beach?

This week Consumers detected minor flaws in the welds of a cask loaded with spent fuel. The firm issued a statement through the Associated Press assuring us that the casks are "leak-tight and structurally sound and there is no threat to the health and safety of the public," and that the cask is being emptied "only because of Consumers' high standards of safety."

Meanwhile, the federal government tells us it will be into the next century before there will be a national solution.

I'm just a Joe Blow standing by the side of the road, or is it a beach?

But the emperor looks naked to me.

And a lot of us feel exposed.