

September 7, 1993

The Honorable William J. Hughes  
United States House of  
Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-3002

Dear Congressman Hughes:

I am responding to your letter of August 13, 1993, to Chairman Selin in which you requested the NRC to address concerns raised by one of your constituents regarding a potential meltdown threat resulting from power outages at boiling water reactors (BWRs), as related in an article in The Nuclear Monitor, and specifically, its relation to the Salem Nuclear Generating Station, Units 1 and 2, and the Hope Creek Generating Station. I understand your constituent's concern and thank you for giving us the opportunity to respond.

As stated in the article, the concern is related to the possible meltdown of irradiated fuel that is stored in the spent fuel pools of BWRs if an extended loss of offsite power resulted in a loss of cooling to the spent fuel pool for a time period sufficient to cause fuel damage.

For both the Salem and Hope Creek plants, however, if there were a loss of offsite power, emergency diesel generators will start and supply power to the spent fuel pool cooling system. These plants, therefore, are not as susceptible to the low probability accident discussed in the article.

With regard to the Susquehanna Steam Electric Station, Units 1 and 2, and the possible generic issue for BWRs, the staff conducted spent fuel pool design reviews for all BWRs prior to their licensing and found them to be acceptable. The staff is currently reevaluating this issue to confirm our original findings. The staff has determined that there is no undue risk to the public, while this review is taking place, due to the low probability of the concurrent events required for this postulated event to occur.

I trust this letter will satisfy your constituent's concern.

Sincerely,  
*Original signed by*  
*James M. Taylor*  
James M. Taylor  
Executive Director  
for Operations

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