

April 18, 1979

Hon. Joseph M. Hendrie, Chairman,  
Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
1717 H St., N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20555

Dear Mr. Hendrie:

Attached hereto is a petition filed this date on behalf of four citizens groups requesting the Commission to act immediately to remedy certain actions by the NRC Staff and the Virginia Electric Power Company (VEPCO) which are alleged to be illegal and which will result in human radiation exposures of a magnitude unprecedented in the Commission's history. Briefly, VEPCO obtained NRC Staff approval of a \$169 million proposal to replace the steam generators at Surry Power Station Units 1 and 2 on January 20 of this year and commenced the action shortly thereafter. This project, as described in greater scope and detail in the accompanying petition, involves the following:

- Occupational radiation exposures estimated to total between 4,000 and 11,000 man-rems (equivalent to the exposures expected at a normally operating plant over a period of up to 22 years);
- On-site construction of a long-term waste repository in which will be stored at least 13000 tons of radioactive waste;
- Substantial redesign of the Surry facility, including the addition of coolant water reprocessing systems which will discharge large quantities of effluents into the James River.

Under the facts and circumstances of the Surry project the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) fairly cries out for the preparation of an environmental impact statement (EIS). Yet the Staff not only declined to prepare an EIS, it released an environmental impact appraisal which is clearly deficient under the standards established by the federal courts. Moreover, as the Commission is undoubtedly aware, the Surry steam generator replacement project is only the first step in a long series of related projects which will inevitably be performed to cure widespread deterioration of Westinghouse steam generators. Operators of the Turkey Point and Palisades nuclear plants have already sought formal NRC approval for such projects. The preparation of a programmatic EIS concerning all pending and future applications for such permission was therefore required before the Surry project could proceed.

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In addition, the Surry steam generator replacement project entails several material violations by VEPCO of NRC regulations. Foremost among these is the construction of the long-term waste storage facility on site: while this specific action in and of itself contravenes 10 CFR §21.301, the overall approach is inconsistent with the rational resolution of the nation's nuclear waste dilemma. Petitioners assert further that the Surry project constitutes a material reconstruction of the facility, in violation of 10 CFR §50.91, as well as a partial dismantling of the facility, in violation of 10 CFR §50.82.

The petition calls upon the Commission to exercise its inherent authority and responsibility under the Atomic Energy Act to protect the public health and safety, to ensure compliance by its licensees with regulatory requirements, and to oversee the activities of the Staff in light of limitations imposed by federal law. The relief requested is set forth in the petition: it includes issuance of a directive to the NRC Staff requiring preparation of the environmental statements called for under NEPA, and issuance of an order halting the Surry project pending a showing by VEPCO as to why the project should continue in the face of the violations cited above.

Above all, petitioners urge to Commission to move with utmost haste. Every day of delay result in massive and needless radiation doses and tilts the cost-benefit analysis away from more reasonable alternative means of solving the problem.

Respectfully,



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Attachment

cc: all Commissioners  
Director of Nuclear Reactor Regulation ✓  
Hon. Gary Hart, U.S. Senate  
Hon. Morris K. Udall, U.S. House of Representatives