

Rec Fac Branch

THOMAS B. EVANS, JR.
DELAWARE

COMMITTEES:
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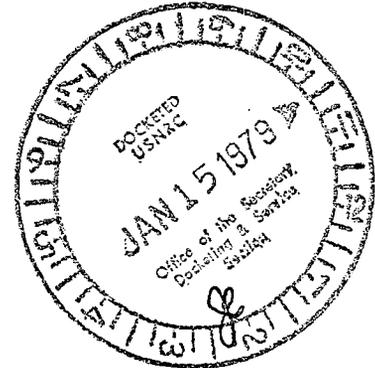
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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

January 5, 1979

1/3/79



Honorable Marcus A. Rowden
Chairman
Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D. C. 20555

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I have been contacted by one of my constituents, Mr. Ernie Mabrey of the Delaware Safe Energy Coalition regarding the potential safety hazards posed by the Salem I Nuclear Power Plant.

For your easy reference, I am enclosing a copy of Mr. Mabrey's correspondence and I would appreciate any comments you would care to make on the questions raised by the Coalition.

With kindest regards,

Sincerely,

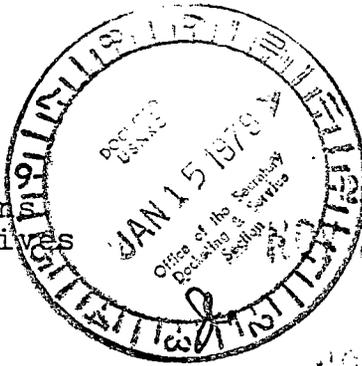
Thomas B. Evans, Jr., M.C.

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Enclosure

November 24, 1978

Congressman Thomas B. Evans
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515



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Dear Congressman Evans:

NOV 27 1978

Enclosed is a copy of the Morning News article of November 21 on the serious safety hazards posed by the Salem I nuclear power plant. Also enclosed is a copy of our letter to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission calling on them to shut down the Salem plant until a full and open investigation of these safety hazards has been completed. The Delaware Safe Energy Coalition urges you to contact the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and push for this investigation. With hundreds of thousands of Delawareans living in a 20-mile radius of the Salem I plant, it is urgent that the question of the safety of these plants be resolved. We would deeply appreciate any action you take in this matter, and would be more than happy if we could with you or one of your representatives on this matter. My home telephone number is 731-0675, and my work number is 378-9881.

Thank You,

Ernie Mabrey
Ernie Mabrey
Delaware Safe Energy
Coalition

November 24, 1978

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D.C. 20555

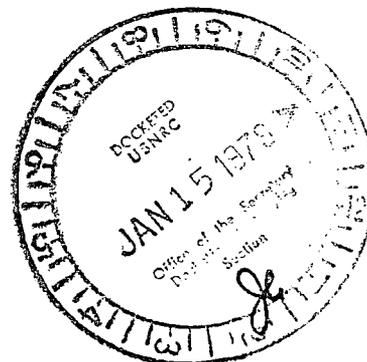
Dear Sirs:

The Delaware Safe Energy Coalition is shocked by the latest news release of the internal memorandum report of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission on the serious safety hazards posed by the Salem I nuclear power plant. The New Castle County area is the closest heavily populated area to the the plant, with about 450,000 people within 20 miles of the Salem I plant. In the event of an accident at Salem, these lives would be endangered. This memorandum, along with the report of the leak of 15,000 gallons of radioactive water from the reactor coolant pump at Salem I, requires us to request the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to shut down the Salem I plant until full and open investigation of the safety hazards has been completed. Too many abnormal occurrences have taken place at Salem I in the past 18 months, and these latest events seem to warrant your fullest attention. Should the plant not be shut down, we will call upon Governor DuPont of Delaware to take whatever legal action is necessary to insure the safety of Delaware citizens.

Thank You,

Ernie Mabrey
Ernie Mabrey
Delaware Safe Energy
Coalition

cc: Senator Joseph R. Biden
Senator William V. Roth
Rep. Thomas B. Evans
Governor Pierre S. DuPont



The Morning News

A Gannett newspaper, Wilmington, Del., Tuesday, November 21, 1978

Vol. 196, No. 97

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Area nuke plants charged with serious safety hazards

By ARTHUR HOWE

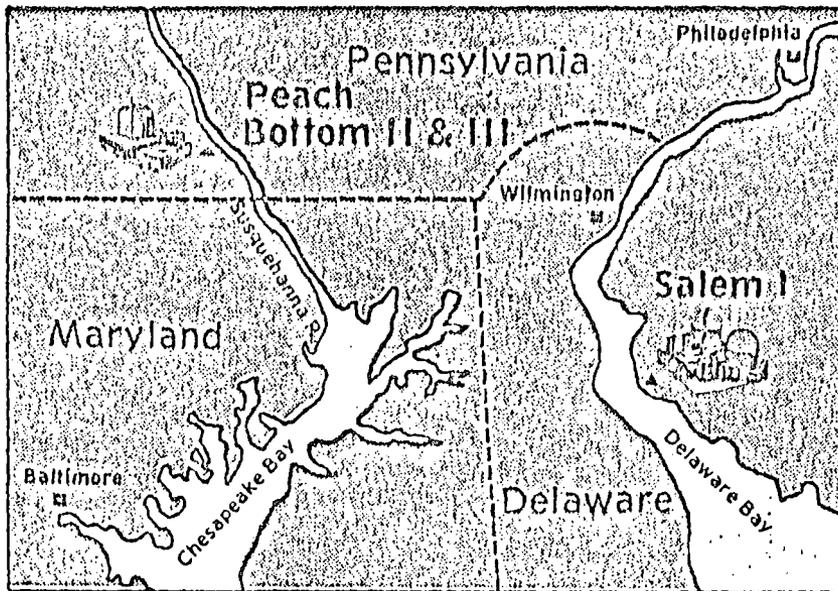
Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff inspectors believe serious safety hazards exist at both the Salem I (N.J.) and the massive Peach Bottom (Pa.) nuclear power plants.

In an internal memorandum obtained from NRC, safety inspectors were most critical of the Peach Bottom II and III nuclear installations, which they characterized as the "least safe" site in the northeast with the poorest management.

"Plant management," the report said, "has appeared incapable of correcting increased plant radiation levels. Management is slow to responding to problems... operating staff presently error-prone."

Investigators criticized the Salem plant's central control room as "a disaster waiting to happen."

Peach Bottom II and III are about 30 miles north of Wilmington on the banks of the Susquehanna River. Salem I is about 12 miles south of Wilmington on Artificial Island, N.J. About 50 percent of each plant is owned by Delmarva Power & Light Co. The investigators' opinions were



Map pinpoints locations of three nuclear power plants in the area cited in NRC staff inspectors' report. All three are within 30 miles of Wilmington.

compiled anonymously and do not reflect the NRC's official views. In fact, regional director Boyce H. Grier took the position that steady improvements have been made at Peach Bottom.

In a memorandum to the director of the Division of Reactor Operation Inspection, Grier said:

"It is our present evaluation that the facility [Peach Bottom] operators are competent and professional and there does appear to be an improvement in employee attitudes."

Still, Grier felt that the management of Peach Bottom "still appears disinclined to take disci-

plinary action against employees" who make mistakes.

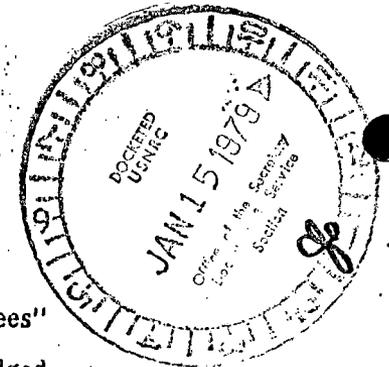
Grier, however, acknowledged that in the past "frequent personnel errors had occurred at Peach Bottom with little indication of action being taken by the licensee [Philadelphia Electric Co. which owns controlling interest in the plant]."

Grier said he did not think the control room at the Salem generating plant was "a potential safety problem." But he did say that the design of the room was different from the type recommended by the manufacturer of the nuclear facility.

It is unclear why Grier's official viewpoint of the two plants is at odds with that of his inspectors. An NRC spokesman said, "It was a question of judgment, this is his [Grier's] judgment. The inspectors responded anonymously. If they had responded otherwise the responses probably wouldn't have been the same."

"All the inspectors did was answer honestly," said James M. Cubie, Washington representative for the Union of Concerned Scientists, a national organization of scientists and professionals critical of nuclear power. "If the an-

See PEACH—Page 6, Col. 1



Peach Bottom plants called 'least safe sites in Northeast'

Continued from Page One

swers weren't anonymous these guys' jobs would be on the line."

The Union of Concerned Scientists obtained the NRC's internal documents under the Freedom of Information Act late last week. Cubie said the federal agency refused to release them for almost a year.

Cubie disparaged the NRC's safety inspections as "biased against enforcement, undermined by political considerations and weak and ineffective."

He cited a May 3, 1976, internal memorandum from the agency's office of inspection instructing regional offices to submit inspector's reports to a regional board of commissioners "for review and approval based on general propriety, political considerations, etc."

The inspectors' subjective opinions were part of a 700-page, four-part study on the performance of 43 nuclear plants throughout the country. The anonymous opinions were compiled before April 1978.

In another portion of the study, completed in September, 1977, Peach Bottom III received an "above average" rating and Peach Bottom II an "average" rating for their record of safety and compliance with NRC regulations.

Yet another study, completed at the same time, gave Peach Bottom II and III a high mark of "A" for their safety record and a "B" for their deficiencies." The study did not elaborate.

The Salem plant, which came on line in June 1977, was included only in the anonymous opinion

Altogether 10 inspectors gave their evaluation of the 1,090 megawatt plant. At least two of the inspectors rated the radiation control and safeguards portion of the installations "acceptable" — or barely safe enough to be permitted to continue operating, according to the study.

A majority of the inspectors, however, gave the plant a slightly less than average evaluation.

The inspectors' comments included: "The plant control room is very poorly designed. This is a relatively new plant with growing pains. It needs close inspection attention to assure that appropriate improvements are made. Have had a number of problems in start-up phase, which were corrected by management. Problems with operator controls."

At least one inspector criticized control room as being designed "in-house — it is a disaster waiting to happen."

Patrick J. Wheeler, a spokesman for New Jersey's Public Service Electric & Gas Co., which owns a majority interest in Salem, confirmed that the control room did not follow Westinghouse Co.'s design, but he added that the utility has not received any indication from the NRC that it posed a safety hazard.

Nineteen inspectors of the Peach Bottom installations gave the facilities a range of evaluations — most of them unfavorable. In almost every category, from emergency planning to overall safety, at least one inspector characterized the plants as marginally safe enough to continue operating.

"This is the least safe site in Re-

l," the report said, "and has the poorest management. Quality Assurance [safety] and security are not upgraded to current standards. Many repeat items of non-compliance."

Another comment was "[The] general attitude of plant appears to be compliance only as required."

One Peach Bottom inspector complained that management of the Philadelphia Electric Co. which owns most of the plant, has attempted to "control" NRC inspectors' access to the plant by following them around.

Another plant inspector said "Plant radiation levels have been increasing with time. Design and staffing of plant appear to have

not been capable of handling this change."

Peach Bottom is beset with "careless operations and poor maintenance," one wrote.

A Philadelphia Electric Co. press release cautioned against the inspectors' survey on the ground that they are "collected opinions and as any opinion surveys, are subjective and may be affected by the makeup of the individual."

Freida Berryhill, chairman of the Coalition for Nuclear Power Plant Postponement, said the inspectors' evaluation doesn't surprise her.

"I've been keeping a chronology of the failures — all the leaks and breakdowns," she said. "I have been living in mortal fear since the day these plants went on line. Peach Bottom is contaminating the milk and cheese of the area. Salem is plagued with incurable failures."

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

In the Matter of)
)
PUBLIC SERVICE ELECTRIC AND)
GAS COMPANY)
)
(Salem Nuclear Generating Station,))
Unit 1))
)
)
)

Docket No.(s) 50-272

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that I have this day served the foregoing document(s) upon each person designated on the official service list compiled by the Office of the Secretary of the Commission in this proceeding in accordance with the requirements of Section 2.712 of 10 CFR Part 2 - Rules of Practice, of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's Rules and Regulations.

Dated at Washington, D.C. this
15th day of Jan 1979.

Eugenia M. Pleasant
Office of the Secretary of the Commission

