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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

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April 23, 1979

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

Dear Chairman Hendrie:

Reports of operator errors, departures from safe operating procedures and mechanical problems at the Davis-Besse nuclear plant operated by Toledo Edison near Port Clinton, Ohio, have raised serious doubts about the safety of this plant.

I am aware that this plant has been shut down for reasons unrelated to the accident at Three Mile Island. But I am also aware that your agency has expressed concern over all similar Babcock & Wilcox installations because of possible generic defects.

John G. Davis, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's acting director of inspection and enforcement, is quoted as saying in a NRC meeting of April 5:

"If we did have a rating system of A,B,C, we would put Davis-Besse 'C' on this scale. It should be a better plant."

James Keppler, director of NRC's Chicago regional office, has been quoted as saying that the frequency and potential seriousness of mistakes made by plant personnel have given Davis-Besse one of the poorest reputations for operator precision in the region, which includes 21 nuclear plants in the Midwest.

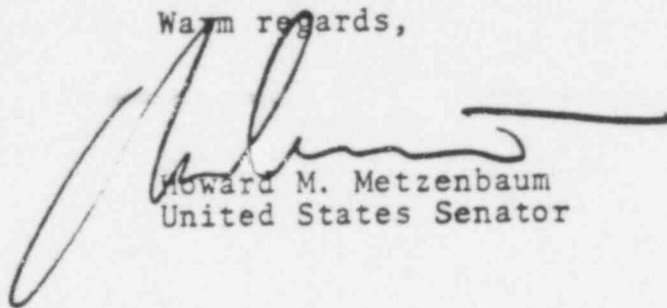
In light of these comments, I am requesting that you provide me with a complete record of the various safety reports and transcripts of meeting notes pertaining to the Davis-Besse plant, along with the NRC's recommendations for corrections and the responses from Toledo Edison.

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Since there are indications that Toledo Edison may put the plant back in operation as early as this week, there is an urgent need to receive these records as soon as possible. I would be glad to have a member of my staff come to your office today to secure copies of these records.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Howard M. Metzenbaum', is written over the typed name. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Howard M. Metzenbaum
United States Senator

HMM:rmh

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