

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

/PRM-50-24/

JOHN F. DOHERTY

Filing of Petition for Rule Making

Notice is hereby given that Mr. John F. Doherty, an individual from Houston, Texas, has filed with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission a petition for rule making, dated July 6, 1979, captioned "Objects Falling From Earth Orbit."

The petitioner requests the Commission to establish procedures whereby the Commission would " . . . inform all holders of Class 10C licenses of any announcement by any Federal agency or department of predicted or expected falling objects from earth orbit either of that department or agency's responsibility or a foreign nation's.

The petitioner states further:

The duty shall consist of this first notice and to continue to inform and advise said licensees until a prediction of the most likely to fall area or areas can be made by the responsible department or agency.

At the time the most likely to fall area has been determined, the Commission or its Appointees shall advise said licensees who operate in the most likely to fall area to arrange for shutdown of the production facility shortly before the expected fall time. The arrangements and procedures necessary for placing licensees in optimum readiness for shutdown may include preparations for a temporary halt in refueling operation, notification of other production facilities of the licensee of increased power demand for a temporary period, and any other activities deemed advisable in view of individual licensees by the Commission.

In the event, the responsible Federal agency or department makes a final determination of the area where objects will fall that includes said licensees, the Commission or its appointees, acting on the basis of predictions of object size, either previously made or announced at that time by the responsible Federal agency or department shall determine if such objects could penetrate any containment structure of the licensee's facility.

Upon conclusion by the Commission or its Appointees such penetration be possible if an object falling from earth orbit were to strike a containment structure at a licensee facility, the said facility shall be ordered

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to stop production and shut down, to protect the public safety. Upon receipt by the Commission or its Appointees from the responsible Federal agency or department of an announcement that the objects no longer pose a present danger of falling on the area originally designated, the Commission or its Appointees may then permit licensee operation to resume."

The petitioner states the following as a basis for the petition:

The basis of this is the Skylab situation where an orbiting object or objects of considerable size are expected to fall to earth with considerable force in the coming week. Petitioner believes a reactor not in operation will be more easily controlled in event an object from earth orbit strikes it or its containment building and satellite buildings than one in operation at the time of the falling and striking. Petitioner further believes a procedure such as the proposed should be available and used in the event of a future Skylab-like situation.

A copy of the petition for rule making is available for public inspection in the Commission's Public Document Room, 1717 H Street, N.W., Washington, D. C. A copy of the petition may be obtained by writing the Division of Rules and Records at the below address.


All persons who desire to submit written comments or suggestions concerning the petition for rule making should send their comments to the Secretary of the Commission, U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, D. C. 20555, Attention: Docketing and Service Branch by October 15, 1979.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: J. M. Felton, Director, Division of Rules and Records, Office of Administration, U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, D. C. 20555, telephone 301-492-7211.

Dated at Washington, D.C.

this 10th day of August, 1979.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission


Samuel J. Chilk
Secretary of the Commission

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