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AUG 15 1979

The Honorable William H. Harsha  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D. C. 20515

Dear Congressman Harsha:

I am pleased to respond to your letter of June 19, 1979 to Chairman Hendrie regarding the William H. Zimmer Nuclear Power Station now under construction in your Congressional district. The application for an operating license for the Zimmer plant is now being reviewed before an Atomic Safety and Licensing Board. Under the NRC rules of practice Chairman Hendrie and the members of the Commission may be called upon to review the orders and decisions of the Licensing Board, and, hence, it would be inappropriate for him or other members of the Commission to comment on the matters raised in your letter. Your letter was, therefore, referred to me for reply.

Your concerns deal with several issues that were highlighted following the recent Three Mile Island Unit 2 accident. I have restated each concern below and a corresponding response.

Concern: Before fuel loading occurs, both Ohio and Kentucky should be given ample time to formulate and complete adequate evacuation plans.

Response: In May of this year, Chairman Hendrie wrote to the Governors of Ohio and Kentucky to emphasize the need for bringing their State radiological emergency response plans to the point where they meet NRC concurrence criteria and to offer NRC assistance in doing so. The NRC State Programs staff has met with Ohio and Kentucky officials in recent weeks to follow up on this offer of assistance. Both States have made good progress. The completed Ohio plan is now being evaluated by NRC and other assisting Federal agencies, and we anticipate NRC concurrence sometime this fall. Part of the Kentucky plan is being similarly evaluated, and we expect to receive the balance of the plan for review in September 1979.

As a consequence of the Three Mile Island incident, the NRC Commissioners have decided that a rulemaking proceeding is needed on emergency planning. This proceeding would include the question implied in your letter concerning NRC concurrence in the State emergency plan prior to the granting of an operating license. In addition, emergency planning is among the contentions that will be litigated at the Zimmer public hearing scheduled to resume in the late fall of 1979.

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Concern: Again, prior to plant operation, offsite monitoring procedures should be instituted to test the air and water in the area of the Zimmer plant.

Response: The Zimmer plant is equipped with radiation monitors within the plant and in all effluent release pathways which set off alarms and automatically isolate the pathways and/or the facility in the event that potential radiation releases would exceed pre-determined levels. Releases resulting from normal operation are monitored, controlled and treated to assure compliance with the "as low as is reasonably achievable" criterion established in Title 10, Part 50, of the Code of Federal Regulations. In addition, there are two onsite and 30 offsite sampling stations near the Zimmer station which will provide radiological monitoring during the plant operation. Baseline radiological background data have been accumulated for this monitoring program for over three years.

Again, as a consequence of the Three Mile Island incident, we are studying the problem of monitoring radiation releases during a nuclear incident. Any new monitoring requirements resulting from our study will be implemented on all plants, where applicable, including the Zimmer plant. Monitoring of radiological releases under normal operation and accident conditions will be among the issues litigated at the Zimmer public hearings scheduled to resume in the late fall of 1979.

Concern: While a full time resident inspector has been appointed by NRC, I would recommend that 24-hour monitoring of the plant itself be undertaken, either by manual or mechanical procedures.

Response: Although NRC has received numerous suggestions for around-the-clock inspection, the staff continues to believe this would be inefficient because most maintenance, testing, calibration and special operations are scheduled during day shifts. However, in order to raise the NRC confidence in the licensee's safety related performance, we have proposed, subject to budgetary approval, the addition of a resident "unit" inspector assigned to each preoperational and operating nuclear power unit. The resident "unit" inspector program would be an expansion to the present resident "site" inspector program; not a duplication. Under this program, the Zimmer station would have a unit inspector in addition to the presently assigned site inspector which should significantly improve the sample of the total licensee work activities examined by independent NRC tests. As appropriate, some random inspections can be conducted during shifts other than the day shifts. The proposed program is believed to be an efficient and effective way to upgrade NRC inspection of licensee activities.

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At the present time, although the NRC site resident inspector assigned to the Zimmer station will normally be present for 8 hours during the day time shift, he is on call at any time. In addition, as for other nuclear sites in the United States that have operating units, direct telephone lines have been installed which tie the Zimmer site to the NRC's emergency operations center in Bethesda, Maryland, and the Inspection and Enforcement Regional office for the plant.

Comment: It is my hope that fuel loading at the Zimmer facility will be delayed until the NRC and the President's Commission have completed their investigations of Three Mile Island so that the findings can be applied to the Moscow plants.

Response: We estimate that the reports of the investigations from the NRC and the President's Commission will be available well before the fuel loading date currently projected for the Zimmer plant. We plan to evaluate the Zimmer plant, as well as other plants in the licensing review process, with respect to effects of the lessons learned from the Three Mile Island incident and issue a safety evaluation report. The Atomic Safety and Licensing Board's licensing decision for the Zimmer station will be based in part on the staff's safety evaluation. Before Zimmer is licensed for operation, consideration will also be given to recommendations of the President's Commission and the NRC Three Mile Island Special Inquiry Group.

We hope this information has addressed your concerns adequately.

Sincerely,  
(Signed) Lee V. Gossick

Lee V. Gossick  
Executive Director  
for Operations

DEisenhut  
FSchroeder  
DMuller  
PSS  
HKShapar  
JCook ✓  
VStello  
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*Pages 1+2 retyped in 6/80*

\*See previous yellow for previous concurrences

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