



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20555

NOV 28 1979

Docket Nos.: STN 50-528/529/530

Mr. Robbie D. Zormeier
4106 West Sandara Street
Tucson, Arizona 85704

Dear Mr. Zormeier:

This letter is in reply to your letter of March 29, 1979 regarding concerns you have with nuclear power.

I am sorry that this reply has been delayed. As you may know, the NRC has been occupied with continued support of the efforts at Three Mile Island, appearances before the President's Commission and various committees of Congress that are investigating the Three Mile Island accident, and the realignment of our own resources and priorities to give immediate attention to the problems resulting from the accident.

In your letter you refer to a nuclear power plant to be built in Phoenix, Arizona. Actually, the plant you refer to is the Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station, Units 1, 2 and 3, currently being constructed by the Arizona Public Service Company about 38 miles west of Phoenix. You express concern about the consequences if a "leak" (we assume that you are referring to a loss-of-coolant type accident) were to occur in this plant.

Our criteria for nuclear power plants include the requirement that the plant be designed to mitigate the consequences of a postulated loss-of-coolant accident in order to protect the health and safety of the public should this accident occur. Prior to granting construction permits to the Palo Verde plant, we reviewed the preliminary design of the plant proposed by the applicant and determined, among other things, that the plant will be designed to mitigate the consequences of a loss-of-coolant accident. Before granting operating licenses for the plant, we will again review the design to assure that the design objectives have been met. In this regard the applicant has recently tendered its application for operating licenses. However, due to our continued support of the efforts regarding the Three Mile Island accident, our review of this application has not yet started.

With regard to the Three Mile Island accident, the NRC staff has been conducting an intensive review, over the past several months, of the design and operational aspects of nuclear power plants and the emergency procedures for coping with potential accidents. The purpose of these efforts was to identify measures that

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NOV 28 1977

should be taken in the short-term to reduce the likelihood of such accidents and to improve the emergency preparedness in responding to such events. To carry out this review, efforts within the NRC Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation were established in four areas: (a) licensee emergency preparedness, (b) operator licensing, (c) bulletins and orders followup (primarily in the areas of auxiliary feedwater systems reliability; loss of feedwater and small break loss-of-coolant accident analysis; emergency operating guidelines and procedures) and (d) Short-Term Lessons Learned.

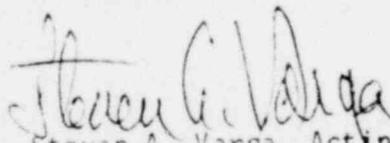
Letters have been sent to all plants, including the Palo Verde plant, setting forth requirements, established to date as a result of these efforts. Additional requirements may be developed as the staff's Lessons Learned Task Force completes its Long Term Requirements. In addition, Commission review of the results of other investigations, including the Presidential Commission and the NRC's Special Inquiry Group, can be expected to lead to additional requirements. Our review of the Palo Verde operating license application will appropriately consider these requirements.

In your letter, you indicated that if a leak were to occur in the Palo Verde plant, then people may get cancer and new born babies may get deformed. In this regard, the NRC staff has performed an evaluation of the health impact of the accident at Three Mile Island. The results of this evaluation indicate that the projected number of excess fatal cancers due to the accident that could occur over the remaining lifetime of the population within 50 miles of the plant is approximately one. Had the accident not occurred, the number of fatal cancers that would be normally expected in a population of this size over its remaining lifetime is estimated to be 325,000. The projected total number of excess health effects, including all cases of cancer (fatal and non-fatal) and genetic ill health to all future generations (which includes new born babies), is approximately two.

As you requested, we are sending you a summary of a report, NUREG-0558, "Population Dose and Health Impact of the Accident at the Three Mile Island Nuclear Station", which discusses the above evaluation.

I am pleased to have had this opportunity to respond to your letter.

Sincerely,



Steven A. Varga, Acting Assistant Director
for Light Water Reactors
Division of Project Management
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Enclosure:
As Stated

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