



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

RDR  
SS-546

TERA

June 29, 1979

The Honorable Wendell Ford  
United States Senate  
Washington, D. C. 20510

Dear Senator Ford:

I am pleased to respond to your letter of June 14, 1979, to Chairman Hendrie about construction quality problems at the Marble Hill Nuclear Power Plant Station construction site. Chairman Hendrie has referred your letter to me for reply because he may have to sit in adjudication on this subject.

The NRC's Regional Office in Chicago initiated an investigation June 22, 1979, into the allegations of a "cover up" of concrete defects at Marble Hill. The alleged defects involved -- called "honeycombing" -- appear to be the same problems identified by NRC inspectors during the past three months. In response to concerns identified by the NRC in this regard, Public Service of Indiana already had begun corrective action to improve its quality assurance program for concrete work.

As you know, James Keppler, NRC Regional Director, and others of his staff visited the site to review the problems on June 26, 1979. At that time, in recognition of the extent of the problem, the company agreed to stop placement of concrete for safety-related structures (primarily the reactor containments and auxiliary buildings). The utility will continue work on non-safety-related structures using its upgraded quality assurance program in order to demonstrate its effectiveness. An additional team of NRC inspectors was dispatched to the Marble Hill site to carefully monitor these concrete placement activities and to evaluate programmatic improvements in the quality assurance program. Once the effectiveness of the quality assurance program is demonstrated, the NRC will permit safety-related work to resume. On the other hand, if additional problems are identified in this ongoing work, the company has agreed to stop all concrete work until acceptable corrective action is taken.

Steps are also being taken by the utility to verify the adequacy of previously poured concrete. The NRC inspection staff will also monitor this verification program. The commitments made by Public Service of Indiana are documented in the enclosed copy of an Immediate Action Letter issued to the company on June 27.

In the meantime, the NRC investigation will continue its examination of the allegations of "cover-up." Thus far, both the company and the NRC investigators have determined that a number of the concrete repairs were improperly made. The motive and cause of these defective repairs is still under investigation. The NRC thus far has been unable to arrange a meeting with the construction worker who made the allegations; negotiations with the worker's attorney are continuing.

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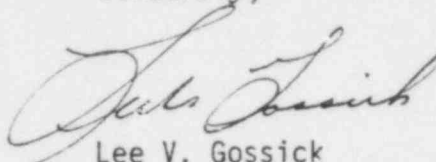
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The Honorable Wendell Ford

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I can assure you that the concrete problems at Marble Hill will be thoroughly investigated and that proper regulatory action will be taken to assure that the quality of construction there meets NRC requirements.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Lee V. Gossick".

Lee V. Gossick  
Executive Director  
for Operations

Enclosure: As stated

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