

EDISON ELECTRIC INSTITUTE

The association of electric companies

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June 29, 1979

The Honorable Joseph M Hendrie
Chairman
U S Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington D C 20555

Dear Dr Hendrie:

Subject: Nuclear Power Plant Licensing Schedules

The Edison Electric Institute urges the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to proceed in an expeditious manner with the processing of all nuclear power plant applications for limited work authorizations, construction permits, operating licenses and license amendments. This important function of the Commission was mandated by Congress as an essential activity to assure the safe application of nuclear power while protecting the health and safety of the public. In setting any system of licensing case-work priorities, as suggested in the NRC staff paper SECY-79-344, we implore the Commission to take into consideration realistic construction progress on each nuclear project and particularly each utility system capacity requirements. Information available to the Institute indicates that significant delays in scheduled operations of several reactors with resultant cost increases and/or potential reliability problems will occur if the revised NRC licensing schedule is followed. In addition, large amounts of oil will be burned, in some instances, to replace the energy not available from the delayed nuclear units. For example, delays of operating license review for 17 nuclear power units will result in capital cost increases of approximately \$1.4 billion, increased power costs for alternative supply of about \$2.1 billion and the probable use of close to 125 million barrels of oil.

Currently committed nuclear projects are important components of our nation's electric power supply for the near-term as well as long-term future. While it is necessary to address the Three-Mile Island accident in a deliberate manner with significant resources, the responsibility of the Commission to review and process license applications must be pursued diligently and on a timely schedule.

Extensive effort by both the NRC and the industry must continue to be directed to the safety implications of the Three-Mile Island (TMI) plant accident. It was a serious accident and

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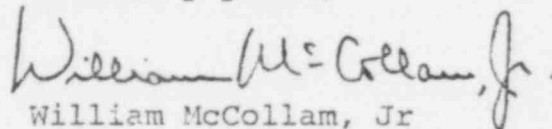
every utility with a nuclear power program is taking positive action as a result of the accident to assure even greater safety of nuclear power in the future. Your efforts to evaluate and take advantage of the lessons learned at TMI are encouraged as a priority item within the Commission. Lower priority tasks should be de-emphasized during this review period to provide the necessary resources.

Licensing casework, however, must also be a high priority task within the Commission and maintained as such. The NRC licensing activity is necessary to assure the timely availability of reasonable cost electricity for the citizens of the nation.

Assurance of an adequate supply of electricity to the nation's citizens is essential to achieving a productive economy and to prevent major social dislocations. Since nuclear power is one of only two options available for the nation's future base load plants for the production of electricity, it is imperative that licensing of these plants proceed in a predictable and responsible manner.

The utility and nuclear industries will cooperate fully with the Commission in its efforts to secure resources to perform these essential tasks, including the support for additional Congressional funding and the supply of persons with technical skills to assist the NRC activity. We request the opportunity for several utility executives to meet with you to discuss the importance of, and direction for maintaining a timely schedule on licensing activities.

Sincerely yours,


William McCollam, Jr

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cc: Hon John F Ahearne
Hon Peter A Bradford
Hon Victor Gilinsky
Hon Richard T Kennedy

Harold R Denton
Lee V Gossick