

THE WHITE HOUSE

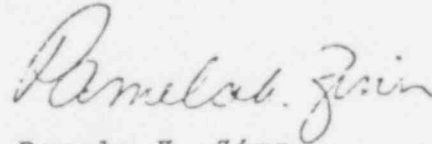
WASHINGTON

MAR 21 1979

MEMORANDUM:

The attached letter (s) addressed to the President is referred to your office for suitable acknowledgment or other appropriate handling at the earliest opportunity. Should you receive mail that has been misdirected, please forward to the appropriate agency.

Thank you.



Pamela K. Zinn  
Associate Director  
White House Correspondence

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1212 Beech Tree Ct.  
Fairfax, Va. 22030  
March 10, 1979

President Jimmy Carter  
The White House  
Washington, D.C.

Dear President Carter:

We are writing to protest the recent decision of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to close a series of nuclear-powered generating plants, including the VEPCO Surry units that service us, until their cooling systems have been earthquake-proofed. We think that the decision epitomizes the kind of partially thought-through federal decision that hurts citizens more than it helps them. We think it is a decision that contradicts the reforms of the federal government that you pledged yourself to bring about. And we think that a reasonable modification of this decision is within your power.

Clearly, NRC thinks that it is carrying out its mandated responsibilities. Earlier regulations were inadequate when the plants were constructed. Technically, NRC was negligent in protecting our interests. But now, when it sets out to correct past mistakes, it must also keep all of our interests in mind.

The likelihood of an earthquake of sufficient magnitude hitting the nuclear facilities in such a way as to trigger the problems NRC projects is extremely low. If such a tremor hits, people will die in far larger numbers from collapsed buildings and bridges and from the aftermath of the disaster. Put in perspective, NRC's worries cover only a small part of the prospective disaster. If the unlikely earthquake misses the nuclear plants, the rest of the disaster will still occur. In short, if the government is in the business of protecting us against earthquakes, the NRC action is totally inadequate. We presume that your administration has no plan to earthquake-proof all the other facilities likely to be affected, closing them down in the meantime. For all its good intentions, the NRC decision finds no reasonable rationale in a responsibility to make nuclear power units safe from earthquakes. The problem is that the NRC has not thought through the other consequences of its decision because they are outside of its field of responsibility. What happens to the cost of electric power for users that must now rely on scarce and costly petroleum fuels for an indefinite period? Should other agencies interpret their responsibilities to protect citizens from remote disasters? Will we halt all driving until the highways are safe? Prohibit all smoking? Surely these activities will result in more deaths than any earthquakes the NRC projects.

In short, please draw the NRC into conversation with the rest of the government and get them to put the problem into a saner perspective. Make the repairs over a reasonable period when the cost to citizens of the NRC's earlier mistakes can be minimized.

Sincerely,

*Patricia A. Henner*  
Patricia A. Henner

446 275  
*Carl J. Henner*  
Carl J. Henner

POOR ORIGINAL