

~~FILED~~
TERA



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

OCT 24 1979

Docket Nos. 50-522
50-523

Mr. Patrick Moore
Greenpeace Foundation
P. O. Box 34307
Vancouver, British Columbia V6K1P8

Dear Mr. Moore:

Your letter to Mr. James Schlesinger, Secretary of Energy, dated June 1979, has recently been referred to this Commission for response. In the interim, your organization was afforded an opportunity to make a limited appearance in July before the NRC Atomic Safety and Licensing Board and I understand that you expressed essentially the same views as those which are summarized in your letter to Mr. Schlesinger.

Inasmuch as you are already aware of the staff's testimony relative to environmental effects expected from the Skagit Nuclear Power Project, a detailed discussion of these effects does not appear necessary in this letter. In summary, our evaluation of the proposed project concluded that no significant adverse environmental effects will result from construction and normal operation of the project. We do not expect any normal operating effects to be detectable in British Columbia.

With regard to accident evaluation, there are specific design features which must be an integral part of nuclear power plants and for which the design basis assumes that there is a release from the reactor pressure vessel of the fission products contained in the nuclear core. This assumption is made on a deterministic basis (i.e., no rational mechanism is assumed to be required to obtain this release) so as to impose extremely conservative design conditions on the engineered safety measures which are physically incorporated in the power plant to mitigate the consequences of any postulated accident. However, this assumption implies that there is a complete failure of the safety systems which are specifically designed to prevent this release of fission products from the reactor core. This method of designing safety systems to withstand postulated worst case accidents, then assuming a failure of these systems and designing physically separate backup systems, which are diverse in principle, is known as "defense-in-depth."

1268 341

7911050 089

Mr. Patrick Moore

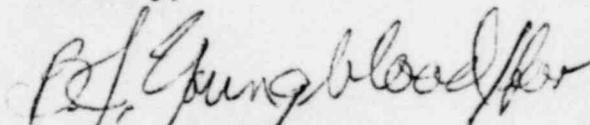
- 2 -

Some of the engineered safety systems which are typically incorporated into the plant design and which mitigate the consequences of the postulated accidents are the primary containment, the secondary containment, containment sprays, and charcoal filters. Prior to licensing a nuclear power plant, the NRC staff must be satisfied that the individual doses received by the public at specified distances from the facility following the design basis accident (i.e., the fission product release from the reactor pressure vessel) are within the guideline values contained in 10 CFR Part 100. These specified distances are identified as the radius of the exclusion area and the radius of the low population zone. Typical values of these distances are about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile for the exclusion area and about 3 to 5 miles for the low population zone.

Although the prevailing winds are in the northerly direction from the Skagit Valley, as you have noted, any fission products in gaseous releases should be well dispersed before travelling far in the direction of Canada. Regarding contamination of the Skagit River, the plant is not equipped to make liquid radioactive releases in normal operation and it is unlikely that an accidental release from the radwaste system or storage tank would cause significant contamination of the river because the transit time would be very slow and the distance from the plant to the river is over one mile. Consequently, we do not expect the fishery to be affected by either normal operation or accidental releases.

For your further information regarding safety considerations, I am enclosing a copy of the staff's Safety Evaluation Report, NUREG-0309, and Supplement No. 1. An additional supplement will be issued shortly on geology and seismology considerations and a copy will be sent to you when it is available.

Sincerely,



Wm. H. Regan, Jr., Acting Assistant Director
for Environmental Projects & Technology
Division of Site Safety and
Environmental Analysis

Enclosures:
As stated

1268 342



June 1979

The Honorable James Schlesinger
Secretary of Energy
c/o Department of Energy
Washington, D. C.
20545

Dear Mr. Schlesinger;

We are writing on behalf of all Canadian citizens who are aware or who, through our efforts and the efforts of many other groups, will soon be aware of the extreme danger to Canada, its population and resources should the Skagit Nuclear Project proceed.

It is inconceivable that the U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission would permit a nuclear facility to be built so near our border, where the consequences of a nuclear accident would result in far greater harm to your neighbours than yourselves. Such permission is nothing short of a callous disregard for Canada and the spirit of international respect which should join our countries. Such permission would constitute a form of international environmental aggression.

The prevailing winds in the Skagit Valley blow from South to North. Any amount of radioactivity released into the air from the Sedro Woolley reactors would invariably affect us. If there were a major spill in the Skagit River, radiation would soon find its way to Puget Sound and thence by tidal action into the Strait of Juan de Fuca and the Strait of Georgia, where it would affect not only Vancouver and Vancouver Island, but many smaller surrounding communities. This creates a possibility for enormous economic and environmental damage.

The Strait of Juan de Fuca and the Strait of Georgia are the migratory routes for many salmon species, and their contamination would result in the destruction of a multi-million dollar industry on both sides of the border. Rich shellfish beds and the fishing grounds of many other commercially valuable species of great economic benefit for both Canadian and American fishermen would be severely damaged or destroyed.

Also affected by any airborne radiation would be the rich dairy and gardening industry of the Lower Fraser Valley. In this area is located some of the most fertile farmland in North America, responsible for more than half of B. C.'s agricultural production. This farmland is located a mere 40 to 50 miles downwind of the proposed reactor site.

Rec'd C^{cc} EDD
Date... 9/13/79...
Time... 11:00...

1268 343

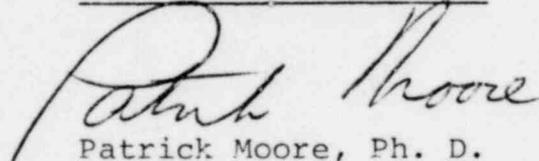
.../2

Our fears are further accented by the knowledge that many geologists question the stability of the proposed site, on the grounds that it is too close to a previously unknown earthquake fault, as well as Mt. Baker, an intermittently active volcano. The entire area of the Puget Basin and the B. C. lower mainland are far too geologically unstable to permit the safe operation of nuclear reactors.

Greenpeace, its supporters and thousands of other concerned Canadians will do everything possible to stop this project. Our efforts have already started and will not cease until Canadian citizens can be confident that the Skagit Nuclear Project will not be permitted to proceed.

Sincerely,

GREENPEACE FOUNDATION



Patrick Moore, Ph. D.
President
Greenpeace Foundation

PM/ln

C.C.

Hon. John Fraser, Minister of Environment, Ottawa
Hon. Cecil Andrus, U. S. Secretary of the Interior
Hon. Bill Vanderzalm, Minister of Municipal Affairs, B. C.
Hon. Rafe Mair, Minister of Environment, B. C.
Dixie Lee Ray, Governor, Washington State
Maxwell Cohen, Canadian Chairman, International Joint Commission
Henry P. Smith III, U. S. Chairman, International Joint Commission
Joseph M. Hendrie, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington
John M. Deutsch, Director Energy Research and Development, Washington
Anthony Albrecht, Director, North Atlantic Affairs,
Office of Economic Cooperation and Development
The Press

1268 344