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

FEB 4 1980

Ms. Carmelia A. Thompson
1110 1/2 Markwood Road
Burlington, Washington 98233

Dear Ms. Thompson:

Your letter of October 17, 1979 to President Carter has been referred to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission for additional comments. By letter dated January 7, 1980, you received comments from the Department of Energy regarding the development of energy technology. Therefore, the following comments deal with the status of licensing of the proposed Skagit Nuclear Power Station only.

Since the Nuclear Regulatory Commission started its licensing review back in 1975, at which time Puget Sound Power and Light filed its applications for construction permits, a number of considerations have surfaced which resulted in delays in the completion of that review. Notably among these was, the difficulty of arriving at the design basis for earthquakes, in view of the complex geology and seismology of the Northwest.

It is not likely that the design basis earthquake issue can be settled, and the staff's safety evaluation presented as testimony in the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board public hearing, prior to the end of 1980. Although additional licensing requirements will be imposed in the future on the Skagit station, along with other nuclear facilities, as a result of recommendations made following the Three Mile Island accident, it would appear that the time needed to resolve the earthquake issue will control the licensing schedule.

It is not possible or prudent at this time to forecast whether or not the Puget Sound Power and Light Company will still be able to view the proposed Skagit site as a viable, economic site until all final requirements and criteria have been firmly established. The Utility, however, has announced, publicly, a three to four year delay in the start of construction at the proposed site. As you suggest in your letter, there may be legal questions within the State of Washington and Skagit County which will need to be settled before the issue of public acceptance of the Skagit County site is resolved. These matters of course do not fall within the jurisdiction of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

I hope this information is useful to you and addresses your concern.

Sincerely,

Original Signed by
H. R. Denton

Harold R. Denton, Director
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

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Department of Energy
Washington, D.C. 20545

JAN 7 1980

Ms. Carmelia A. Thompson
1110 1/2 Markwood Road
Burlington, WA 98233

Dear Ms. Thompson:

Your letter to President Carter expressing concerns about nuclear power has been referred to my office for consideration.

Many factors must be evaluated in the decision to support the development of any energy technology. The economic, environmental, and social costs and benefits, as well as the safety of any option, must be considered. The Federal Government is evaluating these factors as they relate to the energy options available in the United States. As you may know, shortly after assuming office, President Carter presented his plan for the National Energy Policy. This policy statement was amplified and supplemented by the National Energy Act of 1978 and the recently issued National Energy Plan II.

In these statements the President stressed that energy conservation is the cheapest, most practical way to meet our near-term needs. Additionally, strong incentives exist to convert from using oil to using coal, and to develop new energy technologies such as solar energy. But conservation and increased use of coal and solar power are not likely to be adequate to meet all of our future energy requirements. Hence, the President has recognized that we must continue to use nuclear energy from conventional nuclear plants with increased attention to nuclear safety and nuclear waste management. To implement the President's energy program, the Federal Government is conducting research on many different energy systems -- solar, wind, geothermal, nuclear fission and fusion, coal conversion, and other types of advanced energy forms.

Your concerns regarding nuclear power are shared by many people in our country. Accordingly, the Department of Energy is working closely with other Government agencies such as the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and the Environmental Protection Agency to improve nuclear plant safety and to ensure that acceptable means for disposing of nuclear wastes are employed.

While there are issues yet to be resolved regarding nuclear power, just as there are for other energy technologies, we in the Department of Energy take very seriously our responsibility to act in the public interest and provide for safe and economic energy supplies both now and in the future.

Inasmuch as matters pertaining to the licensing, construction, and operation of commercial nuclear power plants are under the cognizance of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, we are forwarding your letter to them for additional comment by copy of this letter.

Sincerely,

Original Signed By
J. P. Thereault

John P. Thereault, Deputy Director
Plans and Analysis Division
Nuclear Reactor Programs

cc: Lee Gossick

October 17, 1979

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DUE
James E. Carter, Jr.
President, United States of America
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington D.C. 20500

Dear President Carter:

When I voted for you, I believed in you and your vision for America. Although you've encountered many problems, I still believe in you, and I still believe you can accomplish your goals, but you need more time in which to do it. I hope you get the chance to continue in office and work toward those goals.

The one area in which I'm disappointed has to do with your views on nuclear power and the part it has to play in America's future. Mr. Carter, I know it is a terribly complex problem, but, Sir, I cannot believe God wants us to dot our agricultural lands with nuclear power plants. We here in Skagit County are having a nuclear power plant literally forced on us. For five long years we have fought against it, struggling to get someone to hear us, someone in a position to help. We have stated repeatedly, in meetings, letters, phone calls, etc., that we do not want the power plant here! But still the licensing process goes on. Puget Power prepares to build. And I ask myself, "What rights do we citizens have?" None, anymore. We cannot even say what we want in our own valley. We finally convinced our County Commissioners to put it to a vote, an advisory vote, and now Puget Power is suing the County Commissioners, to remove the question from the ballot. The power company states it will not tolerate any more delays. It will not tolerate more delays! A power conglomerate tells us, who live here, work here, and raise our children here, that our wishes do not matter! It is economically more feasible for them to build their nuclear plant here than to build it across the state, in the desert, so here is where they intend to build it. Money and power speak, and so, now, people do not count. Is that your vision for America, Mr. Carter? It isn't mine. And I didn't think it was yours when I voted for you and prayed for you.

Please, if there is anything you can do to help us, won't you do it? The Nuclear Regulatory Commission will continue the licensing process beginning on October 25th, 1979, in Seattle, Washington. They will consider geology, seismology, development of evacuation plans, etc., but they will not consider that the people of Skagit County do not want this nuclear power plant in our valley. We are not interested in gambling that there will never be an accident. We do not care about Puget Power's annual profits. We do care about our lives and our mental and emotional well-being. Mr. President, please help us.

Most sincerely,

Carmelia A. Thompson

Carmelia A. Thompson

(House-wife and mother of four)

1110½ Markwood Road

Burlington, WA 98233

206-757-0307