

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

May 9, 1979

NRC PUBLIC DOCUMENT ROOM



Mr. Joseph M. Hendrie
Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D.C. 20555

Dear Mr. Hendrie:

I want to encourage the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to hold a public hearing on Indiana and Michigan Power Company's application to increase nuclear waste storage capacity at its Cook plant in western Michigan. Our nation is in a period in which many people have lost faith in their government's resolve to do the right thing, particularly regarding nuclear power. And we should do anything we can to help restore public confidence in government and give people the opportunity to voice their opinions.

Because persons with objections to the Cook plans inadvertently were not notified by the NRC, they did not have the opportunity to call for a hearing at an earlier stage. I am told, however, that persons with specific objections can ask for a public hearing within 45 days after the plans are reviewed and approved by the NRC. I think you should extend the opportunity that was missed earlier and make every effort to hear and consider all sides in this decision. No one should be able to fairly say that the regulatory process was a sham in this case.

As you may know, I have called for a moratorium on nuclear power plant construction not already underway. I am concerned about nuclear power plant accidents, low-level radiation and waste. I have serious doubt about our long-term ability to deal with the dangerous waste generated by the nuclear power plants. But I have not called for a shutdown of operating nuclear power plants or plants under construction, and I realize we have to store the waste being generated by these plants. I understand the need to expand waste facilities. The only alternative would seem to be transportation of the waste to another storage site, and that would be dangerous for a number of reasons.

It does seem to me that requests for more storage space confirm my doubts about the nuclear power plant industry's ability to solve the waste problem. Consumers Power, for example, is asking for more waste storage space for its Midland, Michigan, power plant that is still under construction.

My doubts aside, I think the Cook situation calls for an extra effort, by the government to be responsive to its citizens.

Sincerely,

Carl Levin
U.S. Senator

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