



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

MAY - 6 1979

Docket No. 50-201

Ms. Janne L. Pyles
Coalition on West Valley Nuclear Wastes
Whitney Road
Holland, New York 14080

Dear Ms. Pyles:

Your letter of March 3, 1979 has been forwarded to me for response. There are several documents that can provide you with information related to the subjects discussed in your letter. These documents are described in the paragraph below.

The provisional operating license for the reprocessing plant in West Valley, New York requires that Nuclear Fuel Services, Inc. (NFS) submit a quarterly report of their operations within thirty days following the end of each calendar quarter. These quarterly reports are submitted to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) staff whereupon copies of the reports are distributed to the Local Public Document Rooms (LPDR's) in Buffalo and Springville, New York. In my previous letter to you, I provided the addresses and hours of operation of the LPDR's. Since the NRC staff distributes the quarterly reports to the LPDR's, copies are not sent directly to individuals.

Under their license, NFS is authorized to receive, store and transfer spent reactor fuel. They are not required to provide notification prior to the receipt or transfer of spent fuel. The purpose of the fuel receipt and storage pool (FRS) at NFS West Valley is to provide for receipt and storage of spent fuel prior to reprocessing the fuel in the adjacent separations plant. As you know, the NFS reprocessing plant has been shutdown since 1972. Furthermore, in September 1976, NFS announced that they would no longer pursue commercial reprocessing. More recently, the Administration has announced a policy banning commercial fuel reprocessing. Finally, informal discussions between NFS and the NRC staff indicate that NFS has no plans to receive spent fuel for storage.

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In your letter of March 3, you asked several questions concerning the defect in the pan under the NFS high level liquid waste tank (designated 8D-2). I am enclosing copies of three documents which will provide you with information related to the discovery of the pan defect and the status of the ongoing investigation. The first of these documents, an NRC memorandum dated January 23, 1979, describes background and events leading to the discovery of the defect in the 8D-2 pan. The second document, an NRC memorandum dated January 31, 1979, summarizes a meeting between NFS, NRC and a representative of the co-licensee, the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA). One of the topics discussed during this meeting was the 8D-2 pan defect. The third document, an NRC memorandum dated March 29, 1979, is the staff's evaluation of the safety associated with the 8D-2 pan defect. Please note that, as stated in the safety evaluation, the investigation of the cause, location and extent of the defect in the 8D-2 pan is not yet complete and will continue for some time. This investigation involves efforts by the NRC staff and its consultants and by NFS.

In response to your questions about the floating incident, I have attached copies of two reports written by a consulting firm engaged by the New York State Atomic and Space Development Authority (ASDA), a predecessor agency to the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority. These reports describe the plans, preparations, and restorative work undertaken as a result of the floating incident.

Enclosed with my previous letter to you were two documents which address your questions on seismic criteria for the FRS and for an Independent Spent Fuel Storage Installation (ISFSI). Answers to your questions on seismic criteria for the FRS and a loss of water accident from the FRS can be found in the NRC Staff Interim Safety Evaluation I dated August 1977. Proposed seismic criteria for an ISFSI are contained in the draft regulation 10 CFR 72.

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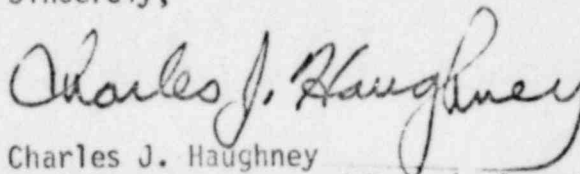
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I hope that the enclosed information is helpful. If I can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me again.

Sincerely,



Charles J. Haughney
Fuel Reprocessing and Recycle Branch
Division of Fuel Cycle and
Material Safety

Enclosures:

1. NRC memorandum dated 01/23/79
2. NRC memorandum dated 01/31/79
3. NRC memorandum dated 03/29/79

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