



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

NRC PUBLIC
DOCUMENT ROOM

Mr. Bill Peters
F. C. Peters & Sons, Inc.
P. O. Box 99
Russellville, Arkansas 72801

Dear Mr. Peters:

I have been requested to respond to your letter of November 8, 1979 to President Carter. You commented upon NRC emergency planning meetings with licensees recently held in your locality.

NRC has an active program in progress for upgrading emergency planning in the environs of all operating nuclear power plants. The program includes visits to the reactor and its environs by emergency planning teams, and meetings with licensed utilities, local and State authorities to discuss new and more stringent requirements. Such meetings are held in the locale of the reactor to facilitate public attendance and observation. Announcement of such meetings are mailed to local press, radio and television at least two weeks prior to the meeting to insure early notification and widest possible dissemination. In addition, the local Public Document Room is requested to post a notice of the meeting. The meeting is advertised as a technical review meeting and a specified time is set aside for public comments on emergency planning.

To date the emergency planning teams have conducted 22 of these visits. Our experience has been that one hour has generally been sufficient to receive public comments; however, in certain localities two hours have been scheduled for public comments to insure enough time for everyone to be heard. It is true that some NRC staff members may have to leave after the official public comment period because of other commitments or travel arrangements but in all cases, NRC staff members make themselves available for questions and informal discussions as long as any member of the public wishes. The emergency planning team members are experts in emergency planning; many questions and comments received are on other aspects of reactor technology. Nevertheless, the emergency planning teams are receptive to public comments, and consequently welcome both oral and written statements.

The visit by the emergency planning team described above is the first step in upgrading emergency plans. The licensed utility is instructed to submit a revised and upgraded plan that complies with the new acceptance criteria within five weeks of the team visit. Written questions by the staff may subsequently be necessary to elicit additional information. It is planned that a second team visit would be made at a later date to verify the implementation of the upgraded plan. At that time, a meeting may be held to discuss the contents of the upgraded plan with the public.

RD-25
Ltr. To President

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Mr. Bill Peters

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We trust that this information is responsive to your concerns. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to call me.

Sincerely,

Harold R. Denton, Director
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

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RUSSELLVILLE, ARKANSAS 72801

November 8, 1979

The Honorable Jimmy Carter
President of the United States
Washington, DC

Dear President Carter:

I just attended the one-hour "public meeting" held by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission in regard to its inspection of the emergency planning of Arkansas Nuclear One. From the way it was scheduled, one would think the NRC was actually attempting to discourage public participation instead of being interested in hearing from the people affected by its actions. I would like to express my criticism and suggest changes in future public meetings by the NRC during these and other inspections.

(1) Not enough notice to the public: The NRC provided a press release to the media approximately two weeks ago, announcing that its team would be in town and that the public would be invited to all sessions. I suppose that the NRC assumed our local media would be efficient enough to pass this information on to the general public. Until I called our local newspaper the morning before the public hearing and requested that they publish the time of that meeting, there had been absolutely no times or places given for any of the meetings open to the public. I suggest the NRC follow up on its news releases and request that the media announce schedules.

(2) Public meeting held at the end of schedule: The public had no opportunity to voice their opinions in the earlier scheduled meetings. I feel that because the public is directly affected, they should have input before the NRC is finished with its proceedings with the utility. For example, the NRC had no idea that rural Arkansas had hundreds of families without electricity, telephones, or good roads to their houses, and they were only able to receive this information after their sessions with the utility when it was to no avail. I suggest that the NRC schedule the public meeting some time between its meetings with the utility, instead of after its business with the utility is finished.

(3) Public meeting scheduled at poor time of day: Most people in Arkansas have jobs and are expected to be at these jobs to make a living. The public meeting today was held at 1:00 in the afternoon and many people who wanted to attend were unable because of their job requirements. I suggest that the NRC schedule public meetings in the evening and night when more people would have an opportunity to attend.

November 8, 1979

(4) Not enough time for public meeting: Only one hour was allotted to this only opportunity for the public to personally approach the Nuclear Regulatory Commission with questions and comments. This is NOT enough time! Lack of communication is one of the greatest problems we have today in any business or organization. The NRC apparently feels that communication with the general public is insignificant because of this very brief time given for this meeting. I requested more time, only to hear the worn-out excuse, "Sorry, I've got to catch a plane." We were given the address of an NRC official, and were told we could write our questions to him for answers. This is not satisfactory! I suggest that the NRC not only schedule their meetings at a more appropriate time as mentioned above, but also expand the meeting to up to four (4) hours, as they do with their sessions with the utility.

The NRC will be making future inspections of other plants, and will be returning to Russellville. I feel that the above four requests are in order and that with your input, the NRC will comply. Will you please make every effort to see that the general public is given ample opportunity to express its views to the NRC on its scheduled visits to communities affected by nuclear power plants.

Thank you for your assistance.

Cordially yours,

Bill Peters

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