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April 3, 1980

Joseph Hendrie, Chairman
Nuclear Regulatory Commission
1717 H. Street, NW
Washington, D. C. 20555

Harold Denton
Nuclear Reactor Regulation
7920 Norfolk Avenue
Bethesda, MD 20555

Gentlemen:

I am an attorney who lives and works in the Pottstown, Pennsylvania area. Like everyone else, I am concerned about the health and safety of myself and my family. This concern has prompted me to correspond with you concerning the Nuclear Power Plant under construction at Limerick, Pennsylvania. In light of recent events in the nuclear power industry, as well as recent seismic activity in the Philadelphia area, I feel compelled to advise you of two facts which I am aware of concerning the Limerick Power Plant. Perhaps this information is already known to you or perhaps it is insignificant. However, I feel compelled to disclose it so that it might be discussed for whatever value it might have in determining the future of the Limerick Plant.

In early January of 1974, I applied for a job with Gilbert Associates in Reading, Pennsylvania, as a technical writer. During my interview for the job, the chief technical writer used the Limerick Power Plant site studies done by Gilbert Associates, as an example of the type of work I would be involved in. Apparently, Gilbert had been commissioned by Philadelphia Electric Company to do the initial site studies. I was told that the Limerick site was ranked third or fourth out of the six site studies that had been done by Gilbert. Since it was not top on the list, I asked why it had been selected as the power plant's location. I was told that although there were at least two or three more advantageous sites for the Nuclear Power Plant, the Limerick Site was selected by Philadelphia Electric Company because they had determined that notwithstanding the additional problems of water shortages etc. that the Limerick Site posed, that public opinion and reaction would be easier to deal with and control at Limerick than at the other more advantageous sites. The technical writer told me that as far as he knew, that was the chief reason the Limerick Site was selected.

In 1975 I learned that this plant was being constructed directly on a fault line or fissure in the earth's surface. It is my understanding that this fissure or fault had been filled with tons and tons of concrete and supposedly would pose no danger to the plant after it began operating. However, recent seismic activity along the eastern coast of the United States has raised the question in my mind as to whether that original decision is still valid. At the time the base for the containment building was constructed, I believe there had been no measurable seismic activity in the Philadelphia area in over a hundred years. However, within the last month, several earthquakes measuring approximately 3.5 on the Richter Scale have been detected in the Philadelphia area.

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I do not pretend to have the ability to pass judgment on Philadelphia Electric Company, either for the selection of the site or for the potential problems which the site might cause. Admittedly, my information is second hand and thus, the possibility exists that I either misunderstood or was misinformed on these facts. Nevertheless, I believe that the facts should be known both by you and the general public so that it can be determined whether or not the facts are true and accurate and what significance, if any, these facts might have in deciding whether to finally license the Limerick Plant for operation. If the facts as I have relayed them to you are true, then I believe an intensive investigation should be launched concerning the Limerick Power Plant and very careful consideration given before this plant is permitted to operate.

Of late, the citizens of this country are constantly being bombarded by the media with the energy issue. We are told that because of our dependence on foreign oil, nuclear power is necessary for the future. I believe that first and foremost the safety of the citizens of this country should be considered. If that means that there will be no electric power for a few hours each day, or that I cannot drive my automobile for a few days each week, I am willing to make those sacrifices. The preservation of the health and safety of each and everyone of us must be the first priority. Please investigate this information in the interests of protecting area residents. I would appreciate being notified of the results of your investigation.

Thank you for your attention.

Very truly yours,


Eugene Orlando, Jr.

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