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REGULATORY DOCKET FILE COPY

April 16, 1980

Mr. Edward Helminski  
Office of Intergovernmental Affairs  
The White House  
Old Executive Office Building  
Room 118  
Washington, D. C. 20500

Dear Mr. Helminski:

Enclosed, per your request, is draft language you might want to use in responding to a communication concerning information handling during the February accident at the Crystal River Nuclear Power Station. If I can be of further assistance, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Frank Ingram  
Assistant to the Director  
Office of Public Affairs

Enclosure;  
As stated

OFFICE ▶	OPA				
SURNAME ▶	F Ingram				
DATE ▶	4/16/80				

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The Nuclear Regulatory Commission's information handling of the February 26 accident at the Crystal River Nuclear Power Station generally seems to have been prompt and factual. The first announcement was issued at 4:30 p.m. EST, less than two hours after the agency received an initial notification. Two followup announcements were issued later in the day, at 6:00 p.m. and 11:25 p.m. EST. Copies of these announcements are enclosed.

I further understand that the communications system between the Crystal River site and the NRC's Incident Response Center (IRC) in Bethesda, Maryland, was much improved over the one which existed during the early days of the Three Mile Island accident. This was attributable to a "hot line" telephone connection between the site and the NRC. Similar lines to all operating reactor sites were in place by early last summer. In the NRC's view, this improved the quality and timeliness of information supplied to the news media about the Crystal River accident.

Another "lesson-learned" from the Three Mile Island accident, was the desirability of having a central source of information at the site or its nearby environs. This was, in fact, done at Crystal River with senior personnel from the agency's Atlanta office taking over information dissemination responsibilities shortly after arriving on site a few hours after the accident began.

Finally, it should be noted that there always will be times when it is not possible to have an immediate and clear understanding of events as they unfold. In these cases, the better proposition may be to assess the accuracy of available information than to indulge in what may be unfounded and alarming speculation.

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