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Honorable Winthrop Rockefeller  
Governor of Arkansas  
Little Rock, Arkansas 72201

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Dear Governor Rockefeller:

Under the recently enacted National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, a copy of which is enclosed, each Federal agency is required to consult with appropriate Federal, State, and local agencies concerning major Federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment and to prepare a detailed statement concerning, among other things, the environmental impact of the proposed action. I am enclosing a statement of general policy which indicates the manner in which the Commission proposes to exercise its responsibilities under the Act. This policy statement is based upon the Council on Environmental Quality's Interim Guidelines (copy enclosed), and was published for public comment in the Federal Register on June 3, 1970.

As the policy statement indicates, the Commission has identified the licensing of nuclear power reactors as one of the actions which would require the preparation of a detailed environmental statement, and a statement will be prepared for all pending and future applications before a construction permit or operating license will be issued. At the present time, the application of the Arkansas Power and Light Company of Arkansas Nuclear One, Unit 1, is under review by the Atomic Energy Commission, and in May 1970 the Company announced plans for a second plant.

As provided in our policy statement, when we receive an applicant's environmental report, a summary notice of the availability of the report will be published in the Federal Register inviting within 60 days comments on the proposed action and the report from State and local agencies of any affected State, with respect to matters within their jurisdiction, which are authorized to develop and enforce environmental standards. We will send you a copy of the environmental report when it is received.

Congress also recently enacted the Water Quality Improvement Act of 1970 (copy enclosed), which amends the Federal Water Pollution Control Act. This new legislation requires applicants for a construction permit and operating license for any nuclear power plant which will discharge effluents into the navigable waters of the United States to provide the AEC with a certification from the State or interstate pollution control

agency, or the Secretary of the Interior, as appropriate, that there is reasonable assurance that the plant will not violate applicable water quality standards. The AEC would generally be prohibited from issuing any such permit or license without having received this certification. Where actual construction of the facility has commenced, or where an application was pending on April 3, 1970, sections 21(b)(7) and (8) of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, as amended, extend the period of time within which the certification must be obtained. It would be helpful to us to know the name and address of the agency authorized to issue the water quality certification for the State of Arkansas.

If we can provide further information concerning these Acts or assistance in understanding how the Commission intends to comply with their requirements, please let me know. In this regard we would be glad to have our staff meet with interested State and local agencies for a briefing on the Commission's program for the licensing and regulation of nuclear facilities. This could include a discussion of both the environmental effects of nuclear power plants and the policies and procedures under which the Commission discharges its responsibilities for protection of public health and safety with respect to the siting, construction, and operation of nuclear power reactors.

Sincerely,

( signed ) Harold L. Price

Harold L. Price  
Director of Regulation

Enclosures:

1. National Environmental Policy Act
2. AEC Statement of General Policy
3. Council on Environmental Quality's Interim Guidelines
4. Water Quality Improvement Act of 1970

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