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

JUL 2 9 1980

The Honorable Rudy Boschwitz
United States Senator
210 Bremer Building
419 N. Robert Street
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101

Dear Senator Boschwitz:

Thank you for your letter of February 26, 1980, regarding the concerns of your constituents from Red Wing-Goodhue County (Minnesota) Safety Council over the evacuation routes around Prairie Island Nuclear Station.

In November 1979, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) requested that all nuclear power plant licensees estimate the time required for evacuating areas near the power plants during an emergency. Northern States Power Company (NSP), which operates the Prairie Island Nuclear Station, responded to the NRC request with a report dated April 10, 1980 (copy enclosed). The adequacy of NSP's offsite emergency plans, including evacuation plans, will be evaluated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

The NRC and FEMA are engaged in an active program of upgrading the state of emergency preparedness at and around operating nuclear power plants and have published jointly the enclosed "Criteria for Preparation and Evaluation of Radiological Emergency Response Plans and Preparedness in Support of Nuclear Power Plants - For Interim Use and Comment". Two provisions contained in this document are particularly relevant to your inquiry since compliance with these provisions will insure a faster response. First, emergency situations are to be classified and declared upon the basis of observable indications in the control room rather than on the basis of monitoring the results of downwind radiological surveys. Thus, the emergency usually would be declared before an effluent left the plant. Second, means for early alerting of the general public within 10 miles of the plant are required. The means to accomplish this are not specified. Sirens and radio alert systems similar to weather alert radios are under serious consideration to fulfill this requirement. The alerting will not be for evacuation; its purpose is simply to gain the public's attention. An ongoing educational program will instruct the public, upon receiving the alert signal, to seek shelter in one's home, close doors and windows, and listen to local radio and TV stations for further instructions. In cases where evacuation is appropriate, necessary instructions will also be provided.

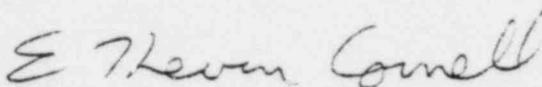
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The Honorable Rudy Boschwitz

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We hope this information is helpful to you. If we can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,



for William J. Dircks
Acting Executive Director
for Operations

Enclosures:

1. Submittal by NSPC
2. NUREG-0654/FEMA-REP-1
3. Incoming correspondence dtd 1/23/80