

NINETY-SIXTH CONGRESS

MORRIS K. UDALL, ARIZ., CHAIRMAN

PHILLIP BURTON, CALIF.
 ROBERT W. KASTENMEIER, WIS.
 ABRAHAM KAZEN, JR., TEX.
 JONATHAN B. BINGHAM, N.Y.
 JOHN F. SEIBERLING, OHIO
 HAROLD RUNNELS, N. MEX.
 ANTONIO BORJA WON PAT, GUAM
 BOB ECKHARDT, TEX.
 JIM SANTINI, NEV.
 JAMES WEAVER, OREG.
 BOB CARR, MICH.
 GEORGE MILLER, CALIF.
 JAMES J. FLORIO, N.J.
 DAWSON MATHIS, GA.
 PHILIP R. SHARP, IND.
 EDWARD J. MARKEY, MASS.
 PETER H. KOSTMAYER, PA.
 BALTAZAR CORRADA, P.R.
 AUSTIN J. MURPHY, PA.
 NICK JOE RAHALL, W. VA.
 BRUCE F. VENTD, MINN.
 JERRY HUCKABY, LA.
 LAMAR GUDGER, N.C.
 JAMES J. HOWARD, N.J.
 JERRY M. PATTERSON, CALIF.
 RAY KOGOVSEK, COLO.
 PAT WILLIAMS, MONT.

DON H. CLAUSEN, CALIF.
 MANUEL LUJAN, JR., N. MEX.
 KEITH G. SEBELIUS, KANS.
 DON YOUNG, ALASKA
 STEVEN D. SYMMS, IDAHO
 JAMES P. (JIM) JOHNSON, COLO.
 ROBERT J. LAGOMARSINO, CALIF.
 DAN MARRIOTT, UTAH
 RON MARLENEE, MONT.
 MICKEY EDWARDS, OKLA.
 RICHARD B. CHENEY, WYO.
 CHARLES PASHAYAN, JR., CALIF.
 ROBERT WHITTAKER, KANS.
 DOUGLAS K. BEREUTER, NEBR.
 MELVIN H. EVANS, V.I.

COMMITTEE ON INTERIOR AND INSULAR AFFAIRS
 U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
 WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515

March 7, 1980

CHARLES CONKLIN
 STAFF DIRECTOR
 ROBERT A. REVELES
 ASSOCIATE STAFF DIRECTOR
 LEE MC ELVAIN
 GENERAL COUNSEL
 STANLEY SCOVILLE
 SPECIAL COUNSEL
 FOR LEGISLATION
 GARY G. ELLSWORTH
 MINORITY COUNSEL

Honorable John F. Ahearne
 Chairman
 U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
 Washington, D. C. 20555

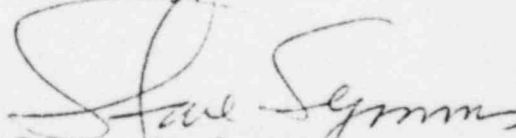
Dear Chairman Ahearne:

We appreciated your testimony before us March 7.
 Your testimony, however, has raised questions which we
 believe require written answers for our record. We
 would appreciate your response to these questions within
 45 days.



Don H. Clausen
 Ranking Minority Member
 House Committee on Interior
 and Insular Affairs

Sincerely,



Steven D. Symms
 Ranking Minority Member
 Subcommittee on Energy
 and the Environment

Enclosure

Experienced Personnel

In testimony, Chairman Ahearne stated "we have been experiencing some difficulty in finding sufficient numbers of qualified people to fill positions as there is also active recruiting under way by the nuclear industry." While NRC has been actively recruiting you state "we do not know at this time whether or not we will be able to bring Nuclear Reactor Regulation up to ceiling over the remainder of this fiscal year. Unfortunately, attrition has reduced these numbers."

The previous quote is a significant point in NRC's ability to implement its lessons-learned program, the resumption of licensing, as well as to meet Congress' requests.

1. How will this inability to obtain qualified manpower affect the resumption of licensing?
2. What is the impact of Congress' requests on NRC's resources both in terms of direct Member requests as well as legislated requests?
3. What impact does NRC expect this manpower problem to have on the Office of Inspection and Enforcement?

Improvements at the Incident Response Center

The NRC has requested \$3 million for equipment to "improve our capability for handling emergencies at our Incident Response Center in Bethesda.

1. What types of equipment is this \$3 million expected to provide and how will this equipment assist NRC in its mission?
2. What is the staff regime at the Incident Response Center?

High Level Waste Management

In testimony Chairman Ahearne has stated "at \$12.5 million, the requested high level waste management budget for FY'81 is small in comparison, but by providing timely guidance to DOE it could significantly reduce total Federal expenditures for the development of a repository."

1. Can NRC obtain the manpower resources to assure the effective implementation of its waste management effort?

2. With this level of resources, will NRC be able to achieve the waste management schedule outlined in the President's message?

Commission Management Study

The Commission has instituted a study of its management approaches, procedures and structure. The principal objective of the study is to identify changes in current management and decision-making methods and procedures which would "improve our ability to allocate the major part of our time to areas of principal importance."

1. Does the Commission intend to have its rôle in the review of export licenses included in this study?
2. Are the Commissioners going to study the effects of NRC Commissioner requests on the utilization of manpower, its consumption of budgetary resources and its impact on the achievement of the Commission's goals?

Resumption of Licensing

In testimony Chairman Ahearne has stated the NRC staff and Commission are now in the process of defining the precise subset of actions and their degree of completion that will be necessary for resuming the issuance of operating licenses. In their testimony they state "the Commission has approved a staff-recommended list of 38 new requirements that must be met before issuance of an operating license. The Commission concluded that they are necessary but that no conclusion was reached on whether they are sufficient to resume issuance of operating licenses."

1. What is impeding the Commissioners' decision to resume licensing?
2. What direction are the Commissioners providing to the staff on the resumption of licensing?
3. What is the earliest date licensing is expected to resume?

Unresolved Safety Issues

The Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation has established

an organization targeted to solve unresolved safety issues.

1. Can licensing resume prior to the resolution of these issues? If so, what mechanism is the Commission using to separate the high risk from the low risk items?
2. What level of involvement are the Commissioners having in prioritizing the resolution of these safety issues?
3. How do these unresolved safety issues compare in terms of risk to those changes mandated by the lessons learned from Three Mile Island?

Improved Inspection and Enforcement Effort

Chairman Ahearne in testimony has stated "periodic, independent inspections of licensee management control systems by the Performance Appraisal Team will result in the identification of marginal utility performance and will provide a basis for prompt corrective actions."

1. What impact has the acceleration of the Resident Inspector Program had on the availability of experienced NRC inspectors to perform these functions?
2. What additional legislation may be needed to resolve impediments to recruiting the best available personnel?
3. What are the NRC's plans for its routine unannounced inspection program?

TMI-2 Cleanup

In November 1979 the Commission directed the NRC staff to prepare an overall programmatic environmental impact statement on the decontamination and disposal efforts resulting from the TMI-2 accident noting that "pending its completion, immediate actions will be taken to protect the public health and safety should the need arise."

1. What pending environmental hazard does TMI-2 present to the public in its current state?
2. What increase in hazard both to the workers and the public will result from extensive Commission delay in consideration and approval of cleanup action?
3. What degree of Commission attention is being paid to the cleanup effort?