



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

JUN 23 1980

Ms. Hoppy Whitman  
Legislative Coordinator  
129 E. Main Street  
Mechanicsburg, PA 17055

Dear Ms. Whitman:

I have been asked to answer the January 18, 1980, letter from the Student Nurses Association of Pennsylvania to the Chairman of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting the Association's resolution concerning public health implications of nuclear power plants.

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has already initiated many actions and programs that will satisfy the intent of this resolution. The following is a discussion of our actions and programs.

The NRC has taken an aggressive approach in providing more effective safety controls for nuclear power plants. The actions cover such areas as nuclear power plant general safety criteria, system design requirements, operations and licensing.

The NRC also has a substantial research effort directed toward providing technical information, independent of the nuclear industry, to define with greater precision the safety margins provided in nuclear facilities. These research programs are quite extensive in scope and utilize a substantial amount of our annual budget.

We have also developed an extensive emergency preparedness program. Currently all radiological emergency response plans for nuclear power plants prepared by NRC licensed utilities plus State and local governments are undergoing revision to upgrade the plans and thus improve emergency preparedness. The Federal Emergency Agency and the NRC have recently published joint interim upgraded acceptance criteria for these plans ("Criteria for Preparation and Evaluation of Radiological Response Plans and Preparedness in Support of Nuclear Power Plants," NUREG-0654, FEMA-REP-1, January 1980). This guidance document is now being used in determining the adequacy of State, local and nuclear power plant emergency plans.

This guidance requires the use of the following four standard emergency classes listed in order of increasing severity: Notification of Unusual Event, Alert, Site Emergency, and General Emergency. For the first three classes the licensee must promptly inform State and/or local authorities of the potential emergency condition. For the General Emergency the licensee must inform State and local authorities within 15 minutes of discovery of the emergency situation. For the first three classes, notification of the local offsite authorities is considered on a case-by-case basis and is based on the integrated emergency preparedness

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Ms. Hoppy Whitman

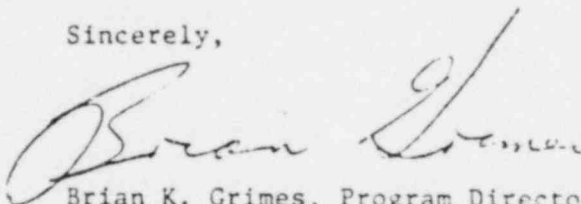
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program of the nuclear power plant operator as well as State and local agencies.

This guidance document also requires that a public information program be developed jointly by the utility, State and local officials. The program is to be designed to assure that accurate and timely information is provided to the public on how they will be notified and what they should do in the event of an incident. The program will include educational information on radiation, respiratory protection, sheltering and evacuation and will include provisions for written material that is likely to be available in a residence during an emergency.

A bibliography and other materials which relate to hospital emergency preparedness are enclosed for your information.

Sincerely,



Brian K. Grimes, Program Director  
Emergency Preparedness Program Office  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Enclosure:  
Materials Related to  
Hospital Emergency  
Preparedness