



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

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JUL 24 1980

The Honorable Robert J. Lagomarsino  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D. C. 20515

Dear Congressman Lagomarsino:

This is in reply to your letter of June 30, 1980, to the Director of the Office of Congressional Affairs of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission regarding concerns of your constituent, Mr. Michael Dyar, about nuclear reactor safety. Mr. Dyar seems to be particularly concerned about quality control of construction of nuclear reactors.

The application of disciplined engineering practices and thorough management and programmatic controls to the design, fabrication, construction, and operation of nuclear power plants is essential to the protection of public health and safety and of the environment. Through a Quality Assurance (QA) program that meets NRC requirements, all organizations performing work important to safety are required to conduct work in a preplanned and documented manner, to independently verify the adequacy of completed work, to provide records that will confirm the acceptability of work and manufactured items, and to assure that all individuals are properly trained and qualified to carry out their responsibilities.

Each NRC licensee is responsible for assuring that its nuclear power plants are built and operated safely and in accordance with NRC regulations. The NRC has responsibilities for developing the criteria and guides for judging the acceptability of QA programs, for reviewing QA programs of each licensee and its principal contractors to assure that sufficient management and program control exist, and for inspecting selected activities to determine that QA programs are being implemented effectively. Where QA programs are found deficient, the NRC requires appropriate upgrading. In those cases where the QA program is not properly implemented, the NRC uses enforcement authority as necessary to achieve proper implementation. If a general problem develops, improvements in QA programs are made industry wide.

Enclosed for information is Section 17 (revised) of the Standard Review Plan of the NRC Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation on quality assurance during the design and construction phases and during the operations phase of nuclear power plants. This details the procedures followed by NRC staff in reviewing and evaluating the QA program of each applicant for a construction permit or an operating license. Since the Three Mile Island accident

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and other incidents, the overall structure for determining an acceptable QA program, including the capabilities and qualifications of individuals performing quality-affecting activities, is being reviewed to identify areas where further improvements can be made.

The NRC program of inspection and enforcement is described in the enclosed excerpt from the NRC Annual Report for 1979. NRC inspectors determine the effectiveness of QA systems by direct observation and verification of licensee activities and by reviewing procedures, checking records, interviewing people, and, where appropriate, making direct measurements. Included are inspections of QA programs of contractors and vendors who supply safety-related equipment, components, and services to power reactors under construction or in operation. The NRC is continuing efforts to develop better methods for the evaluation of the regulatory performance of major licensees, with the objective of anticipating potential problems and averting them through prompt remedial action.

Sincerely,

(Signed) T. A. Rehm  
William J. Dircks  
Acting Executive Director for Operations

Enclosures:

1. Section 17 of Standard Review Plan
2. Chapter 7 of 1979 Annual Report