

SIGNATURE MAIL ROUTING SLIP

(Director's Office)

Mr. Muntzing : \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mr. Bloch : \_\_\_\_\_  
 Dr. Beck : \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mr. Henderson : Concurrence *CS*

Is notification the JCAE recommended? _____ _____
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Concurrences received from:

Compliance \_\_\_\_\_ ( )  
 Materials Licensing \_\_\_\_\_ ( )  
 Nuclear Materials Safeguards \_\_\_\_\_ ( )  
 Radiological & Environmental Protection \_\_\_\_\_ ( )  
 Reactor Licensing \_\_\_\_\_ ( 12/7/71 )  
 Reactor Standards \_\_\_\_\_ ( 12/7/71 )  
 State & Licensee Relations \_\_\_\_\_ ( )  
 Office of General Counsel \_\_\_\_\_ ( )  
 Others \_\_\_\_\_ ( )

Remarks:

Ltr to Protz fm Case replying to ltr of Oct. 13, 1971 to McCool, pertaining to the safety of nuclear power plants

*Add PDR to distribution  
 Enclosures to  
 enclosure*

Date 12/8/71

Originator Telford

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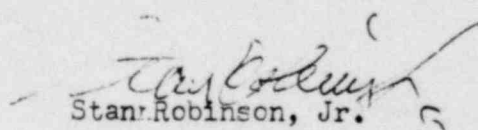
UNITED STATES  
ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON 20545

Oct. 15, 1971

To: Chris Henderson

Subject: Ltr. from Midland Daily News

A copy of the attached letter is submitted for your response.  
The letter has been acknowledged and a copy placed in the  
Public Document Room

  
Stan Robinson, Jr.

cc: Kartalia w/encl.  
Engelhardt w/encl.

PAID OFF BY [unclear]  
DATE 10/15/71  
TIME 2.30

# Midland Daily News

Published by Midland News, Inc.

BOX 432

MIDLAND, MICHIGAN 48640

Phone (517) 835-7171

October 13, 1971

Mr. W. B. McCool  
Secretary  
U.S. Atomic Energy Commission  
Washington, D.C. 20545

Dear Mr. McCool:

In Midland, Michigan, there currently is much concern--both favorable and negative--over a proposed dual-facility nuclear power generating plant to be built here. Consumers Power Company of Jackson, Mich., is the applicant. Bechtel Corporation is the architect-engineer, and Babcock and Wilcox Company is supplying the reactor.

The public hearing for this plant's construction permit is recessed now, pending clarification of environmental and ECCS matters.

From a journalist's standpoint, there appears to be considerable misunderstanding about nuclear power, the health and safety aspects in particular, and we propose to solicit information from the Atomic Energy Commission and fabricators of light water cooled reactors to help clear up some of the public's confusion.

We would appreciate your response to the following questions:

1. This statement has been made here: "The Atomic Energy Commission, the Joint Committee and the nuclear industry have demanded and achieved a level of public safety never before attained in any industry at any time at any place." What is the factual basis for such a statement, specifically for the nuclear industry?

What accidents or operational failures have occurred in commercial nuclear plants since the first was constructed?

2. It also has been stated here that no member of the public has ever been killed or even injured as a result of designing, building or operating these commercial plants. Is this a true statement? I am interested in any accidents related to radiation release or any other type at commercial plants or at

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facilities operated by the AEC, including Oak Ridge National Laboratory.

3. Please detail what malfunctions and breakdowns have occurred in commercial nuclear facilities. Are such breakdowns more hazardous to the public because of the use of atomic energy and radiation than in, for instance, a chemical company's operations?

4. Do the built-in safety features of a plant still permit small radiation leaks?

5. Despite the restrictions on radiation releases which a plant may emit, recently made more conservative by the AEC, can industry or the AEC (or, perhaps, EPA) now, at this time, assess the long-term effects of any radiation leaks from plants, whether minimal or major? Effects such as physical illness, genetic damage or death.

6. In light of the recent model ECCS test failures, do AEC and the industry still have confidence in safety features of nuclear plants? Are there other more important safety features than ECCS?

7. Does industry or the commission feel it is necessary to come up with the best design for safety features and then require that design for all plants, or are others acceptable?

If the answer is no, how is it possible to justify not seeking the best, when less than the best would appear to be "second rate?"

8. Many people are concerned that the problem with nuclear plants is the possibility they may "blow up." Is this the fundamental concern, or is it core meltdown or some other?

9. The Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards has urged the AEC to slow down promoting and building nuclear plants until additional research is completed. (In communications to Dr. Glenn Seaborg, AEC Authorizing Legislation, 1969-70, Pt. III, P. 1619-22) What are your comments?

10. From a safety standpoint (not economics or geography) would you rather site two 800 mwe plants side-by-side at one location or separate, within 10

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to 15 miles of each other?

In other words, is the safety factor a function of megawatts of electricity produced at one point? Or, what are the advantages of siting two plants together?

We appreciate your cooperation in our search for information which, I'm sure you realize, can be an arduous and frustrating task for the concerned laymen. Any additional comments you wish to make would be welcome.

Sincerely,

  
(Mrs.) Claudia Pretz  
Reporter, Midland Daily News