



OFFICE OF THE
COMMISSIONER

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

COMMISSION
CORRESPONDENCE

July 29, 1980

THIS DOCUMENT CONTAINS
POOR QUALITY PAGES

The Honorable Don Ritter
United States House of
Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Ritter:

I appreciated the articles from the Wall Street Journal and the Allentown Call-Chronicle you sent along with your letter of June 17, 1980. I have been meaning to write you about them and am embarrassed that it has taken so long to do so.

I am glad to see some attention to your Comparative Risk Bill, H.R. 4939, being given by the media. Articles of the kind you sent will help to create some understanding of risk assessment and its value in policy making. We need that kind of input, for regulatory decisions and also for the Congress, and I hope you will keep pushing the concept.

We are making increasing use of risk assessment techniques in our work here at the Commission, particularly where a comparison of alternative courses of action can be made with these techniques. In such cases, the inevitable broad error bands on absolute probabilities do not matter so much. The ratios between alternatives are generally good enough to use in decision-making, and are certainly more quantitative than our collective intuitive judgments.

If I can be of help in supporting your legislative efforts in this area, please let me know. I will be glad to do whatever I can.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "J. Hendrie".

Joseph M. Hendrie
Commissioner

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