



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

NRC PUBLIC
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October 3, 1980

Miss Debra Elleman
704 Davidson Street
Raleigh, North Carolina 27609

Dear Miss Elleman:

This responds to your letter of September 17, 1980 with regard to initial actions for the public during severe nuclear power plant accidents. The preferred initial action, while assessments of accident severity are being made, is sheltering rather than evacuation. This is to minimize potential exposures by taking advantage of the protection against radiation provided by the roofs and walls of houses and other buildings. An immediate evacuation order might result in unnecessary exposure to radiation of people outdoors.

However, evacuation might well be recommended once the severity of the accident is assessed and a decision made on whether evacuation or shelter would best minimize public exposures under those particular conditions. Evacuation might also be an appropriate precautionary action if a severe accident occurred within the plant but significant radiation releases were thought to be perhaps several hours away.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Brian K. Grimes".

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

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