

50-170

SEP 23 1980

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MEMORANDUM FOR: Chairman Ahearne (Signed) William J. Dircks

THRU: William J. Dircks, Acting Executive Director for Operations

FROM: Harold R. Denton, Director Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO LETTER FROM SENATOR SARBANES
RE: AFRI RESEARCH REACTOR

Enclosed is a response to Senator Sarbanes' August 12, 1980 letter concerning the Armed Forces Radiobiology Research Reactor (AFRI) in the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland.

It provides a brief description of AFRI's current operating experience and their upcoming renewal application.

Harold R. Denton, Director
Office of Nuclear Reactor
Regulation

Enclosure:
As stated

cc w/encl
Commissioner Gilinsky
Commissioner Hendrie
Commissioner Bradford
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MEMORANDUM FOR: Commissioner Ahearne
THRU: William J. Dircks
Acting Executive Director for Operations
FROM: Harold R. Denton, Director
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation
SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO LETTER FROM SENATOR SARBANES; RE: AFRRRI
RESEARCH REACTOR

Enclosed is my response to Senator Sarbanes' August 12, 1980 letter concerning the Armed Forces Radiobiology Research Reactor (AFRRRI) research reactor in the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, MD.

It provides a brief description of NRC's activities re: AFRRRI's current operating experience and their upcoming renewal application. The content is responsive to your request of May 19, 1980 for information on the subject.

Harold R. Denton, Director
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Enclosure:
As Stated

cc: Commissioner Gilinsky
Commissioner Hendrie
Commissioner Bradford
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MEMORANDUM FOR: Commissioner Ahearne
THRU: William J. Dircks
Acting Executive Director for Operations
FROM: Harold R. Denton, Director
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation
SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO LETTER FROM SENATOR SARBANES RE: AFRRI
RESEARCH REACTOR

Enclosed is my response to Senator Sarbanes' August 12, 1980 letter concerning the Armed Forces Radiobiology Research Reactor (AFRRI) research reactor in the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, MD.

It provides a brief description of NRC's activities re: AFRRI's current operating experience and their upcoming renewal application. The content is responsive to your request of 5/19 for information on the subject.

Harold R. Denton, Director
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Enclosure:
As Stated

cc: Commissioner Gilinsky
Commissioner Hendrie
Commissioner Bradford
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OELD	W. Dircks

The Honorable Paul S. Sarbanes
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Sarbanes:

This is in response to your August 12, 1980 letter to Mr. John F. Ahearne, Chairman, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, concerning the Armed Forces Radiobiology Research Institute (AFRRI) research reactor located on the grounds of the National Naval Medical Center, Bethesda, Maryland.

The AFRRI has submitted a request for upgrading and modifying the Technical Specifications for operation of the reactor. These have been reviewed and comments have been returned to AFRRI for response.

Inspection and Enforcement personnel have routinely inspected the AFRRI facility for compliance with NRC requirements. Although AFRRI has been operated in compliance with safety requirements, they have been cited for non-compliance on procedural and administrative matters.

In addition, AFRRI has been notified that their license for operation will expire in November 1980. We have been informed that Dames and Moore, consulting engineers in Bethesda, Maryland, have been retained to assist in developing AFRRI's license renewal application.

When this is received, the AFRRI application for license renewal will be announced in the Federal Register. At that time, any interested parties may contest the AFRRI application for license renewal. The procedure for filing a Petition to intervene is contained in 10 CFR Part 2.714, a copy of which is enclosed.

In 1974, following a detailed study concerning the issuance of Environmental Impact Statements, the NRC stipulated that research reactors with power levels of 2 megawatts or less will not constitute a safety hazard to the contiguous environment. Accordingly, and unless the AFRRI situation does not meet the basis of the above analysis, an EIS will most likely not be required for the AFRRI license renewal application. A copy of the NRC generic analysis is enclosed.

All of the above information is available in the Public Document Room at the 1717 H Street, N.W., location.

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The Honorable Paul S. Sarbanes

- 2 -

You can be assured that all proper citizen's requests for leave to intervene will be considered.

If you have further questions, please contact Mr. Harold Bernard (492-8357), the Project Manager for the AFRI research reactor.

Sincerely,

(Signed) William J. Dircks

William J. Dircks
Acting Executive Director
for Operations

Enclosures:

- 1. 10 CFR Part 2.714
- 2. Memo Muller to Skovholt,
dtd 1/23/74

SEE PREVIOUS YELLOW FOR CONCURRENCES.

REVISED IN OEDO 9/19/80.

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Req brief paper giving status of NRC involvement with the Armed Forces Radiobiology Research Institute on the grounds of the Naval Medical Center		EDo - 9481 <u>PRIORITY MAIL</u>		
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