

ARC 102



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

MAR 25 1981



Mr. Sidney N. Quam
519 S. W. 19th Street
Boynton Beach, Florida 33435

Dear Mr. Quam:

This is in reply to your letter of February 27, 1981 to the Department of Energy, which was forwarded to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) on March 17.

After the accident at Three Mile Island, the NRC decided not to license new nuclear power plants until criteria for improved safety were developed. The TMI accident showed that there was a need for improvements in the approach to safety. The NRC found that actions recommended by its own staff and by the President's Commission on the Accident at Three Mile Island in the areas of human factors, operational safety, emergency planning, nuclear power plant design and siting, health effects, and public information were necessary and feasible. Interim measures were taken, and an Action Plan was developed to include other safety improvements, detailed criteria for their implementation, and various implementation deadlines.

In 1980, the NRC approved the issuance of licenses for Sequoyah Unit 1, North Anna Unit 2, Farley Unit 2, and Salem Unit 2 to load fuel and, under specified conditions, to operate at low power levels for testing. Sequoyah 1 and North Anna 2 subsequently received full-power operating licenses in 1980, and Farley 2 is to receive such a license soon.

In the case of Salem 2, which you specifically referred to, the remaining prerequisite to the issuance of a full-power operating license is an exercise on offsite emergency preparedness, involving the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the states of New Jersey and Delaware, the Public Service Electric and Gas Co. (to be operator of the plant), and the NRC. It has been agreed by all the parties that a joint exercise for the Salem facility will be conducted on April 8, 1981. FEMA will provide the NRC with findings and determinations on offsite emergency preparedness for Salem by April 24, 1981. A decision can then be made on the issuance of an operating license.

Enclosed is a statement of March 13, 1981, by Chairman Joseph M. Hendrie on steps being taken by the NRC to solve the problem of delays in licensing nuclear power plants. Chairman Hendrie stated his confidence that the actions taken

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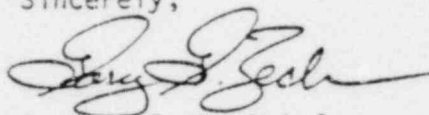
Mr. Sidney N. Quam

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and those to be taken will provide major improvements in licensing schedules without compromising the regulatory requirements for safety.

Sincerely,



Gary G. Zech, Chief
Technical Support Branch
Planning & Program Analysis Staff
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Enclosure:
As stated