

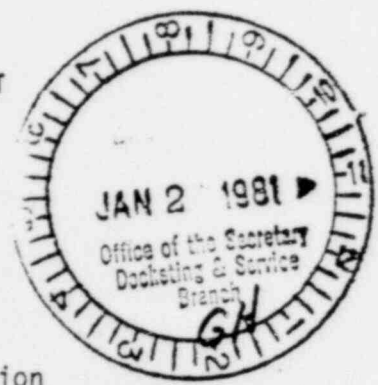


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Box 355  
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January 23, 1981

NS-TMA-2378

Mr. Samuel J. Chilk  
Secretary of the Commission  
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
1717 H Street NW  
Washington, D.C. 20555

DOCKET NUMBER  
PROPOSED RULES  
PP-58-51,100  
NS-109-9820

Attention: Docketing and Service Branch

Subject: Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact  
Statement (EIS) for Revision of Regulations  
Governing the Siting of Nuclear Power Plants;  
45 Fed. Ref. 79820, December 2, 1980



Dear Mr. Chilk:

This is in response to the Commission's request for comments on the range of alternatives and the issues which should be evaluated in the EIS which the NRC intends to prepare as a part of the proposed rulemaking on revision of reactor siting criteria. Westinghouse submits that the comments of the type requested by the Commission would be premature at this time since they are subjects which should be considered in the proposed rulemaking, and such rulemaking cannot be conducted properly until the Commission has decided other issues upon which any decisions on siting criteria must depend. The courts have interpreted The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) to require that the EIS accompany the decision-making process.

The basic document upon which the Commission relies in connection with the siting criteria rulemaking is the Report of the Siting Policy Task Force, NUREG 0625. As we previously pointed out to the Commission in our comments on the Denial of the Union of Concerned Scientists Indian Point Petition, 45 Fed. Reg. 11969, Anderson to Chilk, dated March 10, 1980, the recommendations of the Siting Policy Task Force were based upon incorrect evaluations of risk to the public health and safety. This has been confirmed by more precise risk evaluations conducted by NRC and licensees since NUREG 0625 was issued. These evaluations show that risks to public health and safety are significantly lower than previously calculated. Furthermore, since the NUREG was issued, the Nuclear Safety Oversight Committee has independently reported to the President that "there is evidence suggesting that the radiological consequences of some nuclear accidents may be substantially less than previously assumed" (see attachment). Therefore, the recommendations of the Siting Policy Task Force must be reevaluated in light of this new information before entering into any rulemaking to revise reactor siting criteria.

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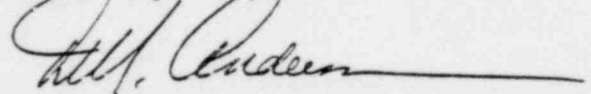
L-4-1, P-50

Until there are Commission decisions on safety goals and methodology, minimum required engineered safety features, and degraded core cooling, no complete evaluation of the need for changes in siting criteria may properly be performed. The identification of alternatives and relevant issues, which is required by NEPA and by logic would be faulty if performed before these other intimately related decisions are made.

As we have stated in numerous comment letters over the past year, and most recently in our comments on the advance notice of rulemaking for consideration of degraded or melted cores, 45 Fed. Reg. 65474, Anderson to Chilk, dated December 31, 1980, an integrated approach should be taken with respect to the five basic issues identified by the Commission for generic rulemaking proceedings. Establishment of safety goals and methodology is a basic step and a prerequisite for the other generic proceedings. Furthermore, the other proceedings should follow in a logical order with standard or minimum required plant safety features and degraded core considerations preceding consideration of siting criteria and emergency planning. This recommendation has also been made by AIF and by the NRC Degraded Cooling Steering Group.

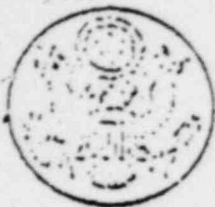
We thank you for this opportunity to comment on this important matter.

Yours very truly,



T. M. Anderson, Manager  
Nuclear Safety Department

/mb



Nuclear Safety Oversight Committee

December 21, 1980

The Honorable Jimmy Carter  
President of the United States  
The White House  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Your Nuclear Safety Oversight Committee has recently examined an issue that could have a significant impact on nuclear safety and regulation. In sum, there is evidence suggesting that radiological consequences of some nuclear accidents may be substantially less than previously assumed.

Scientists at Los Alamos and Oak Ridge National Laboratories have recently examined the unexpectedly low air-borne release of Iodine 131 at Three Mile Island and also studied the pattern of iodine releases in past reactor accidents in this country and abroad.

This research suggests that in light water reactor accidents, radioactive iodine fission products may not be released as a gas as previously assumed in the Reactor Safety Study (WASH 1400) and other studies. In the reducing atmosphere likely to be present in most light water reactor accidents, the new studies suggest that radioactive iodine would combine with cesium and enter into water solution.

If this assessment, which to our knowledge has not been refuted, proves correct, it would have major implications for such regulatory issues as plant siting and emergency planning, because the potential exposure of the neighboring population in the event of a major accident would be much lower than previously assumed.

In our view, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and the Department of Energy should be responding more aggressively to this important development. There are outstanding technical questions surrounding the hypothesis that can and should be answered by analysis and experimentation. In our judgment, you should press for a coordinated research effort that would verify or refute this hypothesis about iodine behavior. This technical question should be resolved on an expedited basis

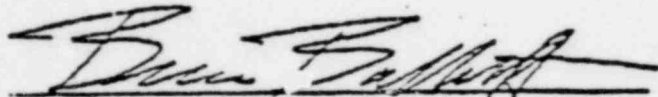
The Honorable Jimmy Carter  
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for it bears directly on fundamental assumptions underlying some of the most important regulatory issues facing the nation.

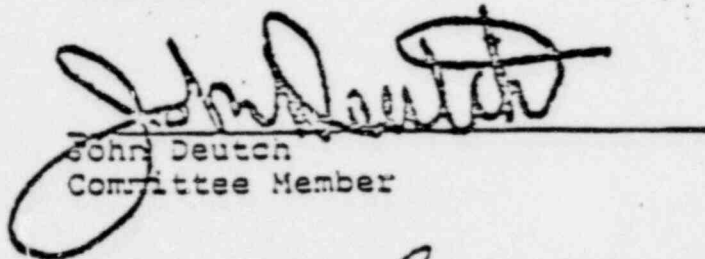
The iodine release question is part of a broader constellation of issues involving source term estimates of the amount of radioactivity that should be expected in the event of a major accident. We believe that the entire set of issues, including fission product chemistry and aerosol formation and behavior in accident environs, deserves increased attention as well.

It would be helpful if you would designate someone from your staff to discuss this matter with us.

Respectfully,



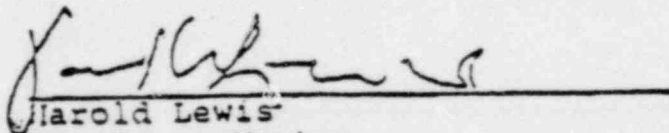
Bruce Babbitt  
Chairman



John Deutch  
Committee Member



Marvin Goldberger  
Committee Member



Harold Lewis  
Committee Member

RB:kae