

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

April 2, 1990

Honorable Kenneth Carr
Chairman
United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D.C. 20555

Dear Mr. Chairman:

We are writing with regard to questions that have been raised as to whether the quality of safety related welds at the Seabrook nuclear plant has been established in the manner required by the Commission's regulations.

In late February, our staffs conveyed to the NRC information indicating that for a period prior to 1984, the radiograph review program at Seabrook had not been conducted properly. This program breakdown created the possibility that the licensee has accepted welds of indeterminate quality. Since February, pursuant to our inquiry into the matter, a number of requests for information have been sent to the NRC. The response to these requests has been dilatory and, in significant respects, inaccurate and incomplete.

Thus far, our inquiry has shown that NRC's inspection reports do not present an accurate description of problems which NRC staff knew to exist. Because the NRC did not require a documented, comprehensive program to resolve the radiograph problem, there is no single report that provides details of the deficiencies and corrective actions taken to verify weld quality. In the absence of a comprehensive corrective action program and report thereon, our inquiry has been forced to focus on individual welds that had been the subject of particular scrutiny.

Documents provided to us concerning one problem weld in a 14 inch diameter pipe in the reactor coolant system show a records gap. It appears that significant difficulties were encountered in producing this weld; more than two years transpired between the time of initial welding activity and final approval. Documents relating to this weld indicate that the licensee's officials were concerned that the problems associated with it extended to other welds in the reactor coolant system.

We consider this an important matter that raises serious questions as to the safety of some number of welds at the Seabrook plant. If the Commission believes the safety of these welds has been demonstrated, the information in support of this belief should be

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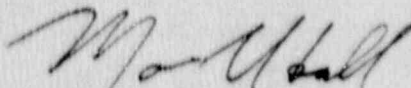
Honorable Kenneth Carr
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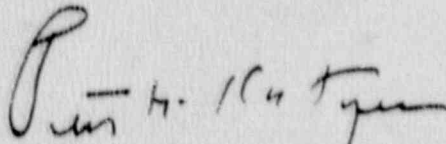
provided to us. Such information, however, should consist of more than conclusory statements of NRC staff reiterating the findings of past inspection reports.

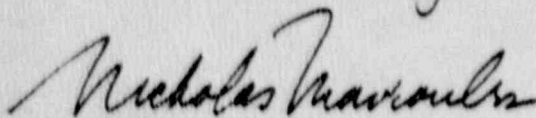
In the absence of objective evidence of quality, we intend to continue our inquiry into the handling of this matter. Accordingly, we have instructed our staffs to request documentation necessary for the conduct of this inquiry. Such documentation is of a kind that we presume was available to NRC staff who recommended to the Commission the issuance of the Seabrook Operating License. We request that you instruct the NRC staff to cooperate in this endeavor so that it is not necessary for us to become directly involved in requests for documents.

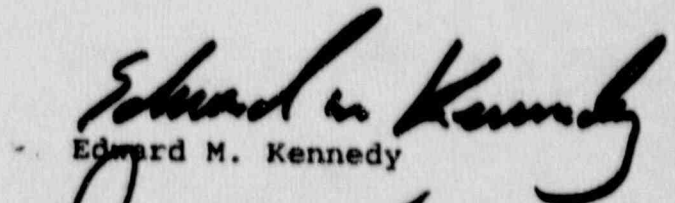
Thank you for your cooperation.

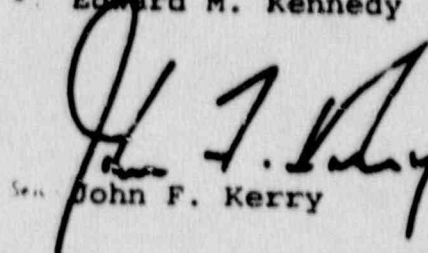
Sincerely,

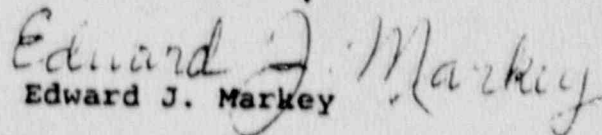

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

In the Matter of

PUBLIC SERVICE COMPANY OF NEW
HAMPSHIRE, ET AL.
(Seabrook Station, Units 1 and 2)

Docket No. (s) 50-443/444-DL

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that copies of the foregoing CARR LTR TO MARKEY W/ATCH 3/20 have been served upon the following persons by U.S. mail, first class, except as otherwise noted and in accordance with the requirements of 10 CFR Sec. 2.712.

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Docket No. (s)50-443/444-DL
CARR LTR TO MARKEY W/ATCH 3/20

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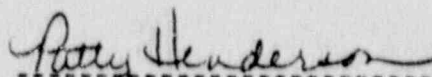
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The Honorable
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Washington, DC 20510

Dated at Rockville, Md. this
23 day of April 1990



Office of the Secretary of the Commission