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U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515

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The Honorable Nunzio Palladino
 Chairman, Nuclear Regulatory Commission
 Washington, D.C. 20555

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This regards NRC's authority, responsibility and procedures to provide assurance, throughout the operating life of a licensed nuclear power plant, that offsite radiological emergency planning adequately protects public health and safety.

My interest in emergency planning around nuclear plants began with a letter to the Commission in October 1976. Subsequently, I have held hearings on this issue and sponsored emergency planning legislation, including Section 109 of Public Law 96-295. This letter stems from conditions brought to my attention relative to Florida Power and Light Company's St. Lucie nuclear station. As you know, St. Lucie Unit 1 is licensed to operate, and Unit 2 is under construction and the subject of an ongoing NRC operating license review.

It is my understanding that a residential development plan for a community of 100,000 has been approved on Hutchinson Island, nearby the St. Lucie site. If this community grows as planned there will be a large population increase on Hutchinson Island during the useful lifetime of the St. Lucie reactors. This projected population growth raises questions as to whether emergency planning and the feasibility of emergency evacuation will continue to provide adequate assurance that public health and safety will not be endangered by operation of the St. Lucie plants. I am informed that the St. Lucie County Commission (which apparently does not oppose per se operation of the plants) has determined that existing bridges between Hutchinson Island and the Florida mainland will be

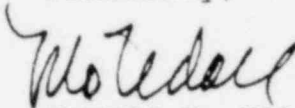
incapable of handling the evacuation of residents of Hutchinson Island in the event of a large radiological release from the St. Lucie nuclear station. The Commission has recommended construction of a new bridge.

Inasmuch as the St. Lucie situation may be similar to changing demographic characteristics during the operating life of other nuclear plants, I would appreciate a Commission response to the following questions.

1. To what extent does NRC have authority to impose conditions (e.g. construction of a bridge) upon a previously issued operating license, if it is determined that conditions around the site have changed such that existing emergency planning and preparedness no longer provides adequate protection of public health and safety?
2. To what extent does the NRC have responsibility, subsequent to the initial issuance of an OL, to assess on a continuing basis the adequacy of offsite emergency planning and preparedness to protect public health and safety?
3. What specific procedures does NRC follow to assure the adequacy of offsite emergency planning and preparedness throughout the operating lifetime of a licensed reactor?
4. What criteria does NRC use to determine whether or not changed conditions around an operating reactor are of a magnitude such that existing offsite emergency planning and preparedness no longer provides adequate protection of public health and safety?

I appreciate your attention to this matter, and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



MORRIS K. UDALL
Chairman