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50-483/486

JAN 6 1981

The Honorable Richard Delling  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D. C. 20510

Dear Congressman Delling:

In your memorandum of December 19, 1980, you requested that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) comment on a letter written by one of your constituents, Mr. Terrence D. Glass. His letter expresses concern about an article in the Kansas City Star indicating that the Callaway Nuclear Plant would allow dumping low-level radioactive water into the Missouri River. In his letter, Mr. Glass also states that "there must be a way to stop either completion of this nuclear facility or the NRC from sanctioning this tremendous health and environmental hazard."

I believe that it would be useful to Mr. Glass if I explained our licensing process. Prior to the Callaway Plant, Units 1 and 2 going into operation, they must receive an operating license. This process was initiated for Unit 1 only when the Union Electric Company (the applicant for the Callaway Plant, Units 1 and 2) made application to the NRC and provided certain documentation including a Final Safety Analysis Report (FSAR) and an Environmental Report (ER). The FSAR sets forth the pertinent details of the final design of the facility and a detailed review of the information will be made by the staff. The ER sets forth the environmental impact of the operation of the Callaway Plant and a detailed review of the information will also be made by the staff. At the conclusion of our review, a Safety Evaluation Report (SER) and Final Environmental Statement (FES) will be issued by the staff stating our findings. In addition to our review, the Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards (ACRS), an independent statutory committee established to provide advice on reactor safety, will make an independent evaluation and present its advice to the Commission. Additionally, a public hearing may be held by the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board (ASLB) if there is a petition for a hearing. It should be noted that a Notice of Opportunity for Hearing with respect to Callaway Unit 1 was issued on November 14, 1980 (copy enclosed). Since this letter will reach you after the latest date for filing petitions for hearing (December 22, 1980), I will note that the Commission's regulations permit a late filing under certain stringent conditions. If Mr. Glass is interested in filing a late petition for hearing, he should contact our office of the Executive Legal Director on procedures for a late filing. Only after each of these steps has been satisfactorily completed can an operating license be issued.

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We believe that the article to which Mr. Glass is referring appeared in the November 23, 1980 issue of the Kansas City Star and was authored by Byron Levin. The article does not clearly distinguish between design objective doses and safety limits. Design objective doses, which are based on capabilities of modern reactor facilities, are small fractions (about 1 percent) of dose limits that are based on public health and safety considerations. These health and safety limits are stated in Title 10 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Parts 20 and 50. All operating reactors must either stay within these limits or stop operating. There is no ambiguity in this area of the rule.

Design objective doses are regarded differently. As stated above, these values are considered objectives, not limits based on health and safety considerations. Our rules state that best efforts be exercised to remain within these objectives but excursions beyond the objectives are permitted. However, the NRC must be notified when a reactor has a possibility of or is about to exceed a design objective. This notification has to state a procedure that the reactor operator plans to follow to bringing the dose rates back to design objective levels.

Based on extensive operating experience, radioactive releases from virtually all reactors have remained well within the design objective levels and have not even approached health and safety limits. The few excursions beyond the design objectives have been of short duration.

We reemphasize the conclusions stated in the FES related to the issuance of construction permits for the Callaway units. The impact on the population and environment associated with routine radioactive releases will be insignificant. Individual and population doses of the magnitude indicated in the FES will not cause any observable effects and in fact very likely will not cause any effects.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this information in response to your request. Mr. Glass' letter is being returned as requested.

Sincerely,

(Signed) T. A. Rehm

William J. Dircks, Executive Director  
for Operations

Enclosures:  
As stated

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DL:LB#1	DSI:RAB	DL:LB#1	DL:AD/L	DL:ER	NRR:DIR	EDO
ADromerick/ls	FCongel	BJYoungblood	RLTedesco	DEisenhut	HDenton	WJDircks
12/29/80	12/ /80	12/ /80	12/ /80	12/30/80	12/ /80	12/ /80