

August 20, 1982

Mr. W. C. Council
Senior Vice President
Northeast Utilities
P.O. Box 270
Hartford, Connecticut 06101

Dear Mr. Council:

Regarding our telephone conversation earlier today about the Critical Mass Energy project report on Nuclear Power Safety for 1981, I would like to make the following points on NRC's plant rankings.

The 1981 NRC Safety Rating referred to in the report was an informal rating prepared by a staff member as a way of tracking Licensee Event Reports that were reviewed in weekly staff meetings on operating reactor events. The group reviewed about four or five such events at each of some 30 meetings during the year. The staff was doing its job in developing a mechanism to assist in analyzing LER's. This work is not considered complete nor conclusive in that it is just one of many factors that is taken into account in a much larger process that brings together data for the annual Systematic Assessment of Licensee performance (SALP).

As you know, the SALP ratings are also referred to in the Critical Mass report. The SALP rankings are used to determine the extent and need for additional NRC review and inspection, as well as additional licensee effort to improve performance of plants. Let me emphasize the SALP rankings are the overall evaluations made by a cross section of the agency's safety experts. LER's and the corrective actions taken in response to those LER's are considered in developing that overall ranking.

I hope this will help put the NRC rankings in perspective.

Sincerely,

(Signed) William J. Dircks

William J. Dircks
Executive Director
for Operations

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William J. Dircks*

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