

NPOC
NUCLEAR
POWER
OVERSIGHT
COMMITTEE

July 3, 1990

The Honorable Kenneth M. Carr
Chairman
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, DC 20555

Dear Chairman Carr:

As Chairman of the Nuclear Power Oversight Committee (NPOC), I wish to emphasize that the U.S. utility industry is vitally interested in timely certification of both the evolutionary and the passive ALWR designs currently under review by the NRC Staff. Resolution of issues in the EPRI ALWR Utility Requirements Document should be used as the basis for resolving technical issues generically and establishing the utility requirements. It is also important to continue to conduct parallel certification reviews. We need to avoid delays of the present schedules of 1991-1992 and 1994-1995 for certification of the two evolutionary designs and the passive designs presently before the Commission.

U.S. utilities are presently studying their options for new baseload capacity for the late 1990s and beyond. Yet, U.S. utilities cannot realistically consider nuclear as an option until the major open technical issues are resolved, certified designs are available, and there is reasonable assurance of regulatory stability and predictability. Today, utility planners need to be considering nuclear as an option in certain regional areas for future baseload requirements; but because of the lack of resolution of the issues just mentioned, it is very difficult--if not impossible--to do so. Many important matters must be resolved in order to reestablish the nuclear option for new orders, but unless there are approved regulatory designs then there will be nothing to work toward ordering. Every month that we slip the schedule for completion of certification can be a month's slippage in our ability to consider the nuclear option.

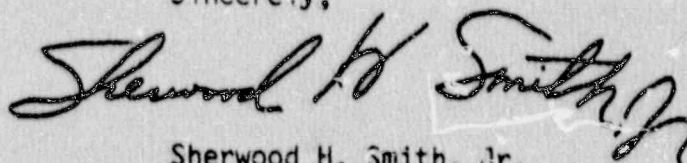
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The nuclear utilities are anxious to do things right, but we need to move ahead promptly in so doing. NPOC is actively working on a program to position the industry to move ahead. Early completion of design certification, however, on a timely basis is essential to the resolution of the other critical issues. We believe it is in the national interest and vital to the utility planning option that the NRC maintain the current certification review schedules.

Sincerely,



Sherwood H. Smith, Jr.
Chairman
Nuclear Power Oversight
Committee

SHS/das

cc: Commissioner James R. Curtiss
Commissioner Forrest J. Remick
Commissioner Kenneth C. Rogers
Mr. James M. Taylor
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Members, Nuclear Power Oversight Committee