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Hon. Nunzio Palladino, Chairman
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D.C. 20555

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The Committee recently issued a report on the NRC research program entitled "Research Programs Conducted By The Nuclear Regulatory Commission," House Report No. 97-795. One of the principal findings of the Committee in this report is that the results of NRC research are not adequately reflected in the Commission's rules and regulations.

Research results concerning fission product release and transport incident to an accident are of prime importance in both safety and economic impact. Significant evidence is now accumulating which confirms that initial estimates of fission product releases used as a basis for many of the Commission's regulations are at least an order of magnitude in excess of actual potential releases. Many of the Commission's regulations involving power-plant siting and emergency planning have become questionable in light of this evidence. I, therefore, ask that the Commission report to the Committee on the schedule for completing research on fission product release and transport and utilizing the results in updating the Commission's regulations.

It has also come to my attention that recent research results from Sandia Laboratories and Battelle Columbus Laboratories (See NUREG/CR-2472, BMI 2095) on the potential health effects of sabotage on a spent fuel shipping cask in an urban setting indicate that health effects have been overestimated by NRC by about 30 fold. This appears to me to bring into question the need for the Commission's regulations on safeguards information protection, routing and escorts for cask shipments of spent fuel (10 CFR 73.21 and 73.37). I, therefore, ask that the Commission report to the Committee on its evaluation of these results.

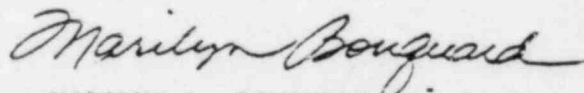
These two issues that have come to the Committee's attention are representative of merely a small part of the research program conducted by the Commission. These examples do serve, however, to accent the need for a "cooperative review committee," as recommended in the Committee's report, to identify potential regulatory changes which are suggested from research results.

Hon. Nunzio Palladino, Chairman
November 18, 1982
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I would appreciate receiving the Commission's views on implementing the recommendations in the Committee's report. We do intend to continue our Subcommittee oversight hearings on the Commission's research programs during the next Congress. Your reactions to the Committee's report will help us considerably in preparing for these hearings.

If you have any questions concerning this letter, please contact me or the Subcommittee Counsel, Louis Ventre, Jr., on 225-2981. Thank you in advance, for your attention to this matter and your cooperation.

Sincerely,



MARILYN L. BOUQUARD, Chairman
Subcommittee on Energy Research
and Production

MLB:Vba