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MAJORITY REGIONAL WHIP

## Congress of the United States

### House of Representatives

Washington, D.C. 20515

November 19, 1982

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

Dear Honorable Palladino:

In a September 17, 1980 report, the General Accounting Office concluded that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's handling of an investigation into allegations surrounding cable manufactured by the Raychem Corp. during the period 1971 to 1975 was "extremely poor." As you are probably aware, the allegations which occasioned GAO's 1980 investigation were made by Mr. Fred Slautterback, a former quality assurance manager at Raychem.

GAO stated that it had no basis upon which to question the technical judgement of the Commission. Subsequent GAO's announcement of this and other conclusions, NRC contracted with Franklin Research Center (FRC) to make a confirmatory technical assessment of the use of Flamtrol cable. FRC concluded its Phase 1 preliminary evaluation and test plan October 23, 1981, and concluded its Phase 2 report June 30, 1982 after consultation with the NRC. In response to the FRC report, you noted in an August 23, 1982 letter to Hon. Morris Udall that NRC:

...(does) not believe that the test previously conducted on Flamtrol cable fully accounted for the space charge effects induced in the suspect cable during the fabrication process...As a result, we can no longer conclude that it has been demonstrated that the suspect cable meets all of our requirements.

The NRC concluded that it would be notifying the affected utilities of its new position regarding Flamtrol cable. The Commission stated that licensees and applicants using the cable in systems important to safety will be required to demonstrate its qualification for its intended function.

I would like to note here that Mr. Slautterback's contention regarding the NRC handling of this matter has been that neither NRC nor FRC has caused to be conducted or has actually conducted the NRC-accepted tests described in IEEE Std. 383-1974 upon which a determination of Flamtrol cable acceptability for service can be made. According to FRC recommendations in the Phase 1 report, cable qualified to IEEE Std. 383-1974 is considered suitable in the nuclear industry for performance under both normal service and design basis event (DBE) conditions. I hope that the NRC gives full consideration to FRC's

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Honorable Nunzio Palladino

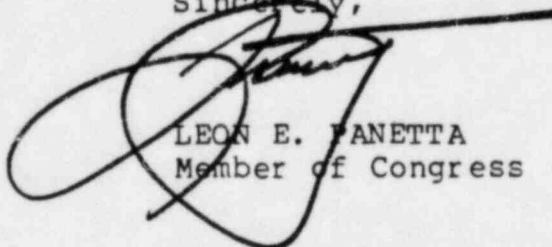
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recommendations that the IEEE 383 standard be applied. While the NRC has expressed its intention to require licensees and applicants to demonstrate suspect cable's qualifications for intended function, I urge the Commission to stipulate in its notification to licensees and applicants using or planning to use suspect cable that compliance to IEEE 383 be demonstrated. Accepted industry standards provide comprehensive requirements for cable qualification; in the interest of an expeditious and safety-sensitive resolution, those standards should be used wherever applicable.

I appreciate the commission's interest and attention regarding this matter, and await your response. If you have any questions, or if I may ever be of any assistance to you, please do not hesitate to let me know.

Sincerely,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, likely belonging to Leon E. Panetta, is written over the typed name and title.

LEON E. PANETTA  
Member of Congress

LEP/mc

cc: Mr. Fred Slautterback  
Hon. Morris K. Udall