



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20555-0001

March 28, 1994

The Honorable Henry Bonilla
Member, United States
House of Representatives
11120 Wurzbach, Suite 300
San Antonio, Texas 78230

Dear Congressman Bonilla:

I am responding to your letter of February 2, 1994, in which you requested the U.S. Department of Energy to address the concerns raised in a letter to you from Mr. David C. Grubb, dated February 1, 1994. This letter was referred to the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) on February 9, 1994. In his letter, Mr. Grubb expressed concern about the restart of the South Texas Project (STP). I can assure you and him that the NRC staff has thoroughly evaluated the plant, its management, and its staff and is confident that STP Unit 1 can be restarted safely.

The NRC follows a detailed process, described in NRC Inspection Manual Chapter 0350, "Staff Guidelines for Restart Approval," to ensure that a plant is safe before restarting from a significant shutdown. As part of this process, the staff formed a review panel that developed a restart action plan for tracking and evaluating all actions that the NRC had to take before allowing either of the STP units to restart. These actions included ensuring that issues identified in previous inspections were resolved, evaluating the licensee's restart plan, evaluating the licensee's management and staff, and evaluating the physical condition of the plant. Since October 1993, the NRC has spent more than 3000 hours inspecting South Texas, including continuous coverage of restart activities. The NRC assessed the readiness of Unit 1 to restart by conducting an operational readiness assessment team inspection. This team consisted of 10 members who spent approximately 2-1/2 weeks on-site. At the conclusion of the inspection, the team supported the restart of Unit 1.

As a result of the problems that caused the plant to be shut down in February 1993, the NRC had issued a confirmatory action letter (CAL) to Houston Lighting & Power that required that several issues be resolved before the plant could restart. In a meeting on February 15, 1994, the NRC review panel agreed that the conditions of the CAL had been met and all items in NRC's action plan had been completed and recommended that the NRC approve the restart of STP Unit 1.

On the basis of its independent inspections and reviews, the NRC staff has determined that the deficiencies identified before and during the shutdown have been satisfactorily addressed and that Houston Lighting & Power has taken appropriate actions to resume safe operation of STP. The staff will provide enhanced inspection coverage prior to restart and until the unit demonstrates successful operation. This increased oversight will allow for an assessment of operations and provide for timely NRC response to problems or events. Particular attention will be paid to the considerable post-maintenance testing that can be performed only when the unit is heated up. Continued close

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March 28, 1994

The Honorable Henry Bonilla

- 2 -

monitoring will be performed to ensure that improvements under way can be sustained. The staff will apply a similar process to ensure that Unit 2 is ready to restart.

STP has been on the NRC watch list since June 1993. The purpose of placing plants on the watch list is to provide increased NRC oversight. This designation means that the plant is monitored more closely, including increased inspection. The increased attention for STP will continue until the NRC has monitored the plant for several months of operation to determine if it can be removed from the list. When it is removed from the watch list, the NRC will continue to observe both units through its normal resident inspection program.

Sincerely,

Original signed by
James M. Taylor

James M. Taylor
Executive Director
for Operations

DISTRIBUTION:

Docket File (w/incoming) (50-498/50-499)

NRC PDR	F. Gillespie
Local PDR	J. Roe
PDIV-2 Reading	E. Adensam
EDO Reading	L. Kokajko
J. Taylor	D. Skay
J. Milhoan	E. Peyton
H. Thompson	OGC
J. Blaha	OPA
J. Callan, RGN-IV	SECY (94-0208)
W. Russell	NRR Mail Room (EDO 9845)
F. Miraglia	N. Olson
L. Reyes	T. Gibbons
A. Thadani	C. Hawes
D. Crutchfield	W. Johnson, RGN-IV

*See Previous Sheet for Concurrence

Office	PDIV-2/LA	PDIV-2/PM	PDIV-2/PM	PDIV-2/D	TECH EDITOR	ADR4/5*
Name	E. Peyton	D. Skay:ye	L. Kokajko	S. Black	M. Mejac	E. Adensam
Date	3/24/94	3/24/94	3/24/94	3/24/94	3/15/94	3/17/94
Copy	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No

Office	DRPW:D*	ADP*	NRR:D*	EDO	OCA	
Name	J. Roe	L. Reyes	W. Russell	J. Taylor		
Date	3/17/94	3/17/94	3/17/94	3/24/94	3/25/94	/ /
Copy	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No

ACTION

EDO Principal Correspondence Control

FROM: DUE: 03/23/94

EDO CONTROL: 0009845
DOC DT: 02/02/94
FINAL REPLY:

Rep. Henry Bonilla
(2/9/94 Referral fm DOE)

TO:

James Phalen, DOE

FOR SIGNATURE OF :

** GRN **

CRC NO: 94-0208

Executive Director

DESC:

ROUTING:

ENCLOSES LETTER FROM DAVID C. GRUBB RE RESTART OF
SOUTH TEXAS NUCLEAR PROJECT

Taylor
Milhoan
Thompson
Blaha
Callan, RIV

DATE: 03/09/94

ASSIGNED TO:

CONTACT:

NRR

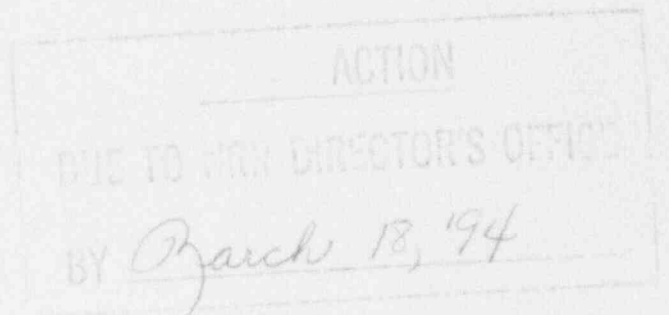
Russell

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS OR REMARKS:

REPLY TO SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS OFFICE.

NRR RECEIVED: MARCH 9, 1994
NRR ACTON: DRPW:ROE

NRR ROUTING: WR/FJM
LR
AT
DC
FG
NRR MAIL ROOM



OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
CORRESPONDENCE CONTROL TICKET

PAPER NUMBER: CRC-94-0208 LOGGING DATE: Mar 8 94
ACTION OFFICE: EDO
AUTHOR: REP HENRY BONILLA
AFFILIATION: U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
ADDRESSEE: NRC
LETTER DATE: Feb 2 94 FILE CODE: IDR-5 SOUTH TEXAS
SUBJECT: SOUTH TEXAS NUCLEAR PROJECT
ACTION: Signature of EDO
DISTRIBUTION: OCA TO ACK
SPECIAL HANDLING: NONE
CONSTITUENT: DAVID GRUBB
NOTES: DOE REFERRAL DATE 2/9/94
DATE DUE: Mar 22 94
SIGNATURE: . DATE SIGNED:
AFFILIATION:



Department of Energy

Washington, DC 20585

FEB 9 1994

*OKA
17-F-2*

The Honorable Henry Bonilla
Member, U.S. House of Representatives
11120 Wurzbach, Suite 300
San Antonio, TX 78230

Dear Congressman Bonilla:

This will acknowledge your recent letter in which you referred a letter from your constituent:

David C. Grubb

Because the subject of your constituent's letter does not fall within the purview of the Department of Energy, we have forwarded your letter to:

Mr. Joseph J. Fouchard
Director
Office of Public Affairs
Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D.C. 20555

Sincerely,

Bonnie Betancourt
Director of Special Projects
Office of the Executive Secretariat



HENRY BONILLA
23D DISTRICT, TEXAS

1529 LONGWORTH OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-4511

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON LABOR, HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES, AND EDUCATION
SUBCOMMITTEE ON DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4323

February 2, 1994

Mr. James R. Phalen
Principal Deputy Asst. Sec. For Congressional, Intergovernmental,
and Public Affairs
U.S. Department of Energy
Forrestal Building Room 7b138
1000 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20585-0001

Dear Mr. Phalen:

Enclosed for your attention is a letter I have received from my
constituent, David C. Grubb, explaining his concerns with the
South Texas Project nuclear plant.

I would appreciate it if after you have reviewed this matter you
would respond back to me at your earliest convenience. Please
direct your response to my San Antonio district office address
listed below.

My Constituent Liaison, Luis Saenz, will be working with me on
this case and is available to work with you and your staff, too.
Please do not hesitate to contact him at my district office in
San Antonio, (210) 697-9055, if we can be of assistance.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Henry Bonilla
Member of Congress

HB:ls

enclosure

PLEASE REPLY TO

11120 WURKBACH, SUITE 300
SAN ANTONIO, TX 78230
(210) 897-9055

1300 MATAMOROS ST. SUITE 1138
LAREDO, TX 78040
(210) 726-4682

111 E. BROADWAY, SUITE 101
DEL RIO, TX 78840
(210) 774-8547

4400 N. BIG SPRING, SUITE 211
MIDLAND, TX 79706
(915) 886-8833

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

February 1, 1994

Congressman Bonilla,

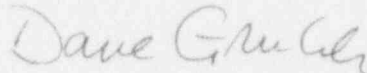
All I ask of you is to obtain assurances from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) that the South Texas Nuclear Project (STNP) will not be restarted unless they are all certain that it is safe. If they are not certain they are flirting with disaster, a big time disaster. Nobody wants another Three Mile Island, or worse.

In summary, they should be sure. If they are not sure, they should wait.

If they restart, they should watch it like a hawk. Camp out there.

(Please see attachments.)

Respectfully,



DAVID C. GRUBB

13719 Pomona

San Antonio 78249

(210) 925-4225 work

(210) 558-6151 home

2-1-94

STP set for check by feds

Power production possible next week

By Cindy Tumiel
Express News Staff Writer

The South Texas Project could return to service by the end of next week if the idled nuclear plant passes muster with federal regulators Feb. 8, plant officials said Monday.

"We think we're ready," plant spokesman Glen Walker said.

The plant has been out of service since February 1993, when it was shut down to address a long list of maintenance and management problems.

San Antonio's City Public Service owns 28 percent of the plant. Other partners are the city of Austin, Central Power & Light of Corpus Christi and Houston Lighting & Power, which manages the facility.

Nuclear Regulatory Commission officials are to go to Bay City next week for a public meeting in which plant managers are to report on their readiness to resume generating power.

Commission officials are expected to decide that afternoon whether they'll allow the plant to resume power production, said NRC spokesman Joe Gilliland.

"I don't have any predictions," Gilliland said. "But we've been tracking all this very closely and we ought to have a pretty good sense by then whether they are ready or not."

If federal regulators concur, one of the plant's two reactors could resume power production by the end of the week, Walker said.

"If they give their concurrence, we could be back on line in about 48 hours," Walker added.

The second reactor is to return to service about two months after the first.

The plant shutdown was blamed for higher consumer electric bills in San Antonio in summer.

Nuclear fuel is the least expensive source of electric power, and loss of the Bay City plant forced CPS to rely on more expensive natural gas and coal-fired plants, offi-

1-28-74

South Texas nuke plant kept on panel's 'watch list'

Associated Press

HOUSTON — The Nuclear Regulatory Commission said Thursday that while the South Texas Project was showing improvement, the panel was keeping the idled twin-reactor nuclear plant on its "watch list" of troubled plants.

"Generally, the NRC's inspection and overview activities have determined that performance at the South Texas Project has been mixed, with a slowly improving trend," James Taylor, NRC executive director for operations, said in a letter to Houston Lighting & Power Co., which manages the plant.

Taylor also noted there have

been extensive management changes at the plant about 100 miles southwest of Houston.

"However, these changes, as well as the program enhancements, are recent and their effectiveness remains to be demonstrated," he said.

Houston Lighting & Power has a 30.8 percent stake in the plant, while City Public Service of San Antonio owns 28 percent, Central Power and Light Co. of Corpus Christi, 25.2 percent, and the city of Austin, 16 percent.

Utility spokesman Glen Walker noted that the only way the plant could get off the list was to be operating and the plant has been idle.

DDICE

Letters to the Editor

Letters should be 250 words or fewer, double-spaced, signed and include the writer's phone number and address. All letters are verified. Fax accepted at 1-210-351-7372. No initials or pseudonyms used. Letters will be edited for length, taste and legal reasons. Address: LETTERS TO THE EDITOR, EXPRESS-NEWS, P.O. BOX 2171, SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS 78297-2171

VIA rides empty buses to bank

Before we get suckered into pitying VIA following its general manager's announcement that it is \$48 million in the red, look at VIA's foolish waste of tax money with unnecessary bus routes.

According to VIA, the second-biggest loss during its 1993 budget year was because of the startup of new routes, \$2.8 million because of a "public outcry" to continue routes VIA wanted to cancel.

Hogwash!

VIA continues to create new routes to purposefully show losses. How do you think it can tap Urban Mass Transit Administration federal funds next year if it shows a profit this year?

For a year and a half, VIA Route 648 has run upward of 26 buses per day through an area north of the airport, down narrow residential streets, with little or no ridership. VIA's own figures show an average of fewer than four riders per bus — most are empty.

I can only imagine how much is being wasted in fuel, wages and depreciation of equipment, not to mention wear and tear on the roads.

Wipe the tears from your eyes, and get mad. It's the only way we'll stop the waste at VIA.

Don Friedrich Sr.

Canadian CAT took only weeks

Re: Sally Holds' Jan. 13 letter, "Canadian system falling citizens":

She said a Canadian, after a blackout, had to wait six months for a CAT scan. My wife had a similar fainting experience in late October near Lethbridge, Alberta (not a major urban center)

The jury did not deem Floyd a threat to society, so the death penalty was not imposed. Floyd will come up for parole in about 12 years and, in the meantime, he can choose to earn college credits while in prison.

The message is clear: If you're going to kill a cop, do it in Texas. Obviously, it has been heard.

Single-parent families, poverty and drugs are going to be around for a while, but we can change the laws and our use of them. If an individual kills a police officer, the penalty should be certain death.

Claire Harrah

HL&P scam artists due big hammer

Re: the Jan. 8 editorial, "It's time to find out why STP still down":

I can tell you why the South Texas Project nuclear plant is still down. Houston Lighting & Power Co., the perpetrator of STP, is an organization that thrives on deceit.

I know because I worked there for 12 years and was deceived myself for much of that time. With STP it had the opportunity to scam not only Houston (whom it has ripped off for decades) but also Austin, San Antonio, Corpus Christi and the Valley.

Unless HL&P is stopped, it will continue to do what it does best — scam and deceive.

Dave Grubb

Cults grow into big religions

Much media attention has been focused on the trial of members of the small cult of Branch Davidians.

Cults are formed by having a charismatic leader who foists be-

Nacho Guarache



Role mo

AUSTIN — I have an odd nomination for the most important thing said by President Clinton on Tuesday night. He said that governments don't raise children, parents raise children — parents who help kids with their homework and teach them right from wrong. "I know," Clinton said. "I had one."

One.

The phrase "role model" used to annoy me. What's wrong with "heroes"? I never believed how important they are until the day I chaperoned a class of junior high school kids around the state Capitol. They were mostly black and brown kids, all bright, from one of those "gifted and talented" classes we used to have before the Legislature decided it would do anything for Texas schoolchildren except raise taxes to pay for their education.

The Legislature is boring for junior high kids: white people standing around talking. But when Wilhelmina Delco, a black state rep from Austin and speaker pro tem of the House, took the chair and started whacking bills through, every black girl in that class went on point, like a trained hunting dog. "Who is that?" "Who's she?" "Why's she up there?"



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TEXAS

Groups urge Public Utility Commission to consider closing S. Texas nuke plant

By Diana R. Fuentes
Chief, Express-News Austin Bureau

AUSTIN — Four activist groups Tuesday called on the state Public Utility Commission to conduct a "thorough study" on whether it would be cheaper in the long run to permanently close the South Texas Project nuclear plant.

"How long can we continue to throw good money after bad?" asked Tom Smith, director of Public Citizen, a consumer watchdog group. "Should consumers be forced to continue to bail out this nuclear lemon?"

The plant, located in Bay City, was temporarily closed in February by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to allow for evaluation and correction of a variety of problems.

Smith and representatives of the other organizations — Texas Citizen Action, Texas Nuclear Responsibility Network and Greenpeace — said at a news conference there



Tom Smith, director of Public Citizen, a consumer watchdog group, calls the plant a 'nuclear lemon.'

was no way to make the plant safe.

"Any short-term fixes the (nuclear commission) orders are basically like putting Band-Aids on a terminal cancer patient," said Bill Jackson of Greenpeace.

Guillermo X. Garcia of the Public Utility Commission said a ratepayer could petition the commission to conduct such a study but no petition had been filed.

Jackson said he expected a petition would be filed.

A spokeswoman for City Public Service in San Antonio, which holds

a 28 percent interest in the project, said mothballing the plant wasn't in the best interest of ratepayers.

"It is in the best interest of CPS customers to have the plant up and running. That way, they receive the benefit of electricity generated from low-cost nuclear fuel," Barbara Stover said.

CPS officials earlier calculated that electric bills were about 8 percent higher than normal last summer, when demand was at its peak, because the utility was receiving no power from the nuclear plant and was having to rely solely on more expensive fuels — coal and natural gas.

Public Citizen recently released a report showing discrepancies between an industry study and an evaluation done by the nuclear commission.

The industry study ranked the South Texas plant the worst in the country in operations and maintenance. The commission study rank-

ed it among the four or five worst-run plants nationally.

Smith said the commission report did not include or was in contradiction with 59 percent of the industry's findings.

While no price tag had been placed on permanently shutting the plant, Jackson said general estimates for closing a "large plant" were about \$3 billion.

Repair costs have been estimated as high as half a billion dollars.

"In Texas we have a wealth of natural gas, and an economy which is ready to produce it," said Tim Curtis of Texas Citizen Action. "We rank second among the states in potential to utilize renewable resources, and only 49th in actual usage."

"We have the potential to meet all additional needs for electric power into the next century through simply conserving and using energy in more efficient ways," Curtis said.

...ing vehicle, in Quidu frame.
... be launched from a shuttle or space station
...ensive satellites.

HL&P center for executives no fish story

HOUSTON (UPI) — An "executive management and training center" is being constructed at a Houston Lighting and Power Co. facility east of Baytown on a private bayou that provides some of the best fishing in Texas.

Sources told the Houston Post many Houston-area lawmakers, city council members and legislators from across the state have been entertained at the bayou, which is closed to the public.

HL&P spokesman Graham Painter said this week that HL&P's parent company, Houston Industries Inc., will pay for the center, not HL&P ratepayers.

The Post revealed this week that HL&P's top officers get bonuses for influencing state and federal lawmakers, city officials, utility regulators and the media. Sources said the bonuses range from \$20,000 to \$100,000 a year.

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