



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

March 30, 1994

The Honorable John L. LaFalce
United States House of
Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515-3229

Dear Congressman LaFalce:

I am responding to your letter of March 8, 1994, regarding discharges of slightly radioactive water from the Fermi 2 nuclear plant into Lake Erie. We want to assure you that the discharges met regulatory limits for release and that the NRC will monitor future significant discharges to ensure that the public's health and safety are protected.

On December 25, 1993, the Fermi 2 nuclear plant suffered a catastrophic failure of the No. 3 low pressure turbine. This resulted in release of some slightly radioactive steam to the turbine building, severe damage to supporting turbine cooling system lines, and actuation of the fire deluge and sprinkler systems. Approximately 1.5 million gallons of water drained to the turbine building and adjacent radioactive waste building basements, flooding the basements to a height of several feet. In order to proceed with damage assessment and recovery actions, the licensee has to remove this water. This is done by processing the water to remove as much radioactivity as possible, then sampling the water to ensure that radioactivity has been reduced to within the regulatory limits before it is discharged to the environment.

Like all nuclear power plants, the Fermi 2 plant is authorized in its license and under NRC regulations to discharge liquid effluents under controlled and monitored conditions. These releases must be within regulatory limits established by the NRC. The licensee did not require additional regulatory authorization for the Fermi 2 discharges. Approximately 1 million gallons, in two discharges, have been released to date. Another 500,000 gallons will be released in April or May.

The NRC staff confirmed by independent measurement preceding the first two discharges that the radioactivity levels of the water in the condensate storage tank were well below the regulatory limits for release and that these results agreed with licensee and State of Michigan sample results. The results indicated that the concentrations of all radionuclides in the tank were small fractions of the 10 CFR Part 20 limits for release to unrestricted areas.

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March 30, 1994

The Honorable John L. LaFalce - 2 -

For the initial release the staff monitored the actual discharge at the release point and local drinking water intake point (city of Monroe water intake) to verify that the levels remained within regulatory limits. Samples were taken at each location during and following the discharge. For all samples, the results indicated there was no detectable radioactivity from the release in the Monroe drinking water. The staff also calculated expected exposures to the general public from the normal ingestion pathway, such as drinking Monroe city water and eating fish from Lake Erie over the course of a year. In all cases, the expected doses represented very small fractions (less than 0.1 percent) of the equivalent amount of radiation expected annually from naturally occurring background sources.

These measures verified that the releases did not pose a risk to the public health and safety or to the environment. The staff plans to perform additional confirmatory analysis of representative samples from future discharges related to the December 25, 1993, incident. As with the earlier releases, these sampling plans will be coordinated with city, county, and state officials before any future releases of contaminated water.

We will be pleased to send you a copy of our completed inspection report documenting the results of this and future discharges when published. If I can be of any further assistance, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Original signed by
James M. Taylor

James M. Taylor
Executive Director
for Operations

*See previous concurrence

OFFICE	PM:PD31: DRPW	LA:PD31: DRPW	*D:PD31: DRPW	*TECH EDITOR	*ADR3:DRPW	D:DRSS: RIII <i>by phone</i>
NAME	TColburn :gll <i>Roe</i>	CJamerson <i>Rec for</i>	LBMarsh	MMejae	JZwolinski	WAxelson
DATE	03/28/94	03/28/94	03/22/94	03/22/94	03/23/94	03/28/94

OFFICE	*D/DRPW	*(A)ADP	*D/NRR	EDC	OCA
NAME	JRoe	LReyes	WRussell	JTaylor	DRathburn
DATE	03/23/94	03/23/94	03/24/94	03/29/94	03/30/94

OFFICIAL RECORD COPY FILENAME: G:\WPDOCS\FERMI\LAFALCE.GT

Congressional Correspondence and Green Tickets

Boxet File 50-341 (w/incoming)
Local PDRs (w/incoming)
EDO #0009890
EDO Reading
J. Taylor
. Milhoan
. Thompson
. Blaha
. Rathbun
. Russell/F. Miraglia
. Reyes
. Martin, RIII
. Bangart, SP
D31 Rdg. File (w/incoming)
Roe
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PA
CA
VRR Mail Room (EDO#0009890 w/incoming) (12/G/18)
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. Wiens
. Gibbons
. Colburn (w/incoming)
. Jamerson
. Miller, RIII

Congressional Correspondence and Green Tickets

Docket File 50-341 (w/incoming)
NRC & Local PDRs (w/incoming)
EDO #0009890
EDO Reading
J. Taylor
J. Milhoan
H. Thompson
J. Blaha
D. Rathbun
W. Russell/F. Miraglia
L. Reyes
J. Martin, RIII
R. Bangart, SP
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N. Olson
S. Wiens
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C. Jamerson
L. Miller, RIII

ACTION

EDO Principal Correspondence Control

FROM: DUE: 04/01/94

EDO CONTROL: 0009890
DOC DT: 03/08/94
FINAL REPLY:

Rep. John L. LaFalce

TO:

Dennis Rathbun, OCA

FOR SIGNATURE OF : ** GRN **

CRC NO: 94-0247

Executive Director

DESC:

ROUTING:

CONSTITUENT CONCERNS RE THE RECENT RELEASE OF
RADIOACTIVE WASTE WATER INTO LAKE ERIE BY DETROIT
EDISON AND THE FERMI II NUCLEAR PLANT

Taylor
Milhoan
Thompson
Blaha

DATE: 03/21/94

ASSIGNED TO: CONTACT:

NRR Russell

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS OR REMARKS:

OR PW - action

*Due
NRR:
March 29, 1994*

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
CORRESPONDENCE CONTROL TICKET

PAPER NUMBER: CRC-94-0247 LOGGING DATE: Mar 18 94
ACTION OFFICE: EDO
AUTHOR: JOHN J. LAFALCE
AFFILIATION: U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
ADDRESSEE: RATHBUN
LETTER DATE: Mar 8 94 FILE CODE: IDR-5 FERMI II
SUBJECT: EXPRESS CONCERN RE THE RECENT RELEASE OF
RADIOACTIVE WASTE WATER INTO LAKE ERIE BY DETROIT
EDISON AND THE FERMI II NUC PLANT
ACTION: Direct Reply
DISTRIBUTION: OCA TO ACK, DSB
SPECIAL HANDLING: NONE
CONSTITUENT:
NOTES:
DATE DUE: Apr 1 94
SIGNATURE: . DATE SIGNED:
AFFILIATION: