



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20555

October 29, 1990

The Honorable Carl Levin
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510-2202

Dear Senator Levin:

I am responding to your letter of October 10, 1990, enclosing a letter from Cynthia Fraser concerning the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission's (NRC's) efforts in ensuring the safety of nuclear power plants. The NRC continually strives to ensure that nuclear power facilities are operated in a manner that ensures the health and safety of the public. Each nuclear plant is subject to daily monitoring and periodic inspections by qualified NRC inspectors stationed at that nuclear power plant. In addition, NRC technical experts perform numerous other specialized inspections at each plant throughout its lifetime. The NRC promptly identifies and deals with violations and deviations from its rules and regulations and strictly enforces compliance with those regulations. I am unaware of any instances where we have deliberately ignored or failed to act on safety issues.

The NRC staff is concerned with the quality of materials used in safety applications at nuclear plants and has identified several instances in which substandard material was supplied to and installed in nuclear power plants. In most cases, these materials were installed in non-critical applications or were analyzed and found capable of performing their functions. Those materials that failed the analysis were promptly removed from service. However, we remain concerned and diligent regarding the possible use of counterfeit or substandard materials. The NRC staff has issued a number of information notices and bulletins warning the nuclear industry of possible substandard materials. We have also asked the nuclear industry to evaluate its procurement and product acceptance programs to increase the ability to detect nonconforming, substandard, or fraudulent materials.

Finally, the NRC is continuing its leadership in preventing the use of substandard materials in nuclear power plants. The NRC staff continues to monitor operating experience of nuclear plants across the country to identify substandard materials issues. In addition, the NRC inspects and investigates vendors of suspect material and takes appropriate regulatory and legal action when it identifies infractions.

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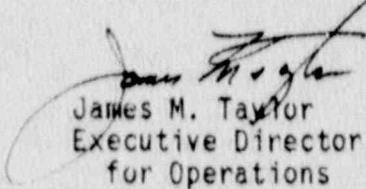
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The Honorable Carl Levin

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I hope the information provided responds to your needs and adequately addresses the concerns raised by your constituent. If you need further information, please let us know.

Sincerely,



JAMES M. TAYLOR
Executive Director
for Operations

Enclosure:
Incoming letter dated October 10, 1990
w/Attachment