



UNITED STATES  
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20555-0001

February 28, 1994

The Honorable George J. Mitchell  
United States Senator  
Post Office Box 5248  
Augusta, Maine 04332

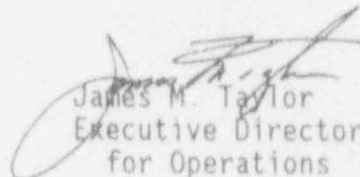
Dear Senator Mitchell:

I am responding to your letter of January 28, 1994, in which you requested information for your constituent, Mr. Zenon A. Belair, concerning the nuclear power plant at McMurdo Sound, Antarctica. That plant, known as the PM-3A, was procured in the early 1960s as part of a military program coordinated by the Army. Installation and operation were carried out by the Navy Seabees who were and are responsible for logistic support at McMurdo Station. We understand that the reactor was operated for a few years and was later dismantled and returned to the United States for disposal.

Construction and operation of the PM-3A took place before creation of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. Because it was a military reactor, it was not licensed by NRC's predecessor, the regulatory organization within the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC). Based on discussion with an NRC staff member who worked for the reactor's builder (Martin-Marietta Nuclear Division) at the time, we believe that technical reviews were handled by personnel of the AEC's Army Reactors Branch.

We suggest that your constituent's letter be referred to the Navy or to the National Science Foundation, which is the operator of McMurdo Station.

Sincerely,

  
James M. Taylor  
Executive Director  
for Operations

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Original signed by  
James M. Taylor

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Executive Director for Operations

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