

CONGRESSIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SYSTEM
DOCUMENT PREPARATION CHECKLIST

This checklist is to be submitted with each document (or group of Qs/As) sent for filing into the CCS.

1. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DOCUMENT(S) LTR to C. Bentsen
2. TYPE OF DOCUMENT Correspondence Hearings (Qs/As)
3. DOCUMENT CONTROL Sensitive (NRC Only) Non-Sensitive
4. CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE and SUBCOMMITTEES (if applicable)

Congressional Committee

Subcommittee
5. SUBJECT CODES
(a) _____
(b) _____
(c) _____
6. SOURCE OF DOCUMENTS
(a) 5520 (document name _____)
(b) Scan (c) _____ Attachments
(d) _____ Rekey (e) _____ Other _____
7. SYSTEM LOG DATES
(a) 1/10/91 Date OCA sent document to CCS
(b) _____ Date CCS receives document
(c) _____ Date returned to OCA for additional information
(d) _____ Date resubmitted by OCA to CCS
(e) _____ Date entered into CCS by _____
(f) _____ Date OCA notified that document is in CCS
8. COMMENTS
None



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

December 28, 1990

The Honorable Lloyd Bentsen
United States Senator
961 Federal Building
Austin, Texas 78701

Dear Senator Bentsen:

This is in response to your October 22, 1990 request regarding the concerns expressed by Mr. Bruce Moody related to the Laguna Verde Nuclear Power Plant in Veracruz, Mexico.

The NRC is not able to comment on the contents of the article mentioned by Mr. Moody as having been published in a Brownsville newspaper since the information supplied by Mr. Moody is sketchy and general in nature. We are aware that similar reports have appeared in a number of publications. We have discussed these reports with officials at the Mexican National Commission for Nuclear Safety and Safeguards (CNSNS) and they have concluded that the reports have no merit. Further, the NRC's cooperation with the Mexican nuclear authorities, both direct and through IAEA, indicates Laguna Verde plant was to be designed, constructed and is being operated in accordance with acceptable safety standards.

As you are aware, the mission of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is to assure that civilian uses of nuclear materials in the United States are carried out with proper regard and provision for the protection of the public health and safety, of the environment, and of national security. Such civilian uses of nuclear materials include operation of nuclear power plants and medical, industrial and research applications. Although the NRC has no regulatory mission in other countries, there has been and continues to be close cooperation between the NRC and the CNSNS. There are formal agreements between NRC and CNSNS for exchange of Technical Information and Cooperation in Nuclear Safety and for Cooperation in Nuclear Safety Research.

As a result of this cooperation, the licensing and inspection of the Laguna Verde Nuclear Power Plant by the CNSNS has followed the regulatory structure, safety standards and practices of the NRC. In addition the CNSNS has received technical advice and assistance from the NRC as part of the bilateral agreements. This technical advice and assistance covers on-the-job training assignments of CNSNS personnel at NRC headquarters, visits of NRC safety experts to CNSNS to provide advice and training over a wide range of technical areas, and provision of numerous NRC technical documents.

In addition to provision of safety related assistance to the Mexican regulatory body, primarily through the NRC, the United States and other advanced nuclear power countries assist the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in safety activities related to the Laguna Verde Nuclear Power Plant. The IAEA is an

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The Honorable Lloyd Bentsen

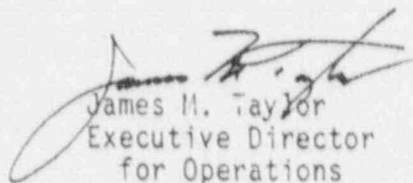
- 2 -

intergovernmental organization within the United Nations system which provides both assistance in nuclear safety to its member states and safeguards inspections to ensure that nuclear material is being used solely for peaceful purposes. Assistance with NRC involvement provided to Mexico by the IAEA includes missions to Laguna Verde by Operational Safety Review Teams (OSART), to review safety practices, and participation of Mexican engineers in nuclear safety training courses. One OSART mission to Laguna Verde was conducted in 1986, two missions took place in 1987 and another OSART mission is tentatively planned for late 1991. Training courses in which Mexican engineers have participated have been organized by the IAEA in the United States, United Kingdom, Spain and other countries. A radiation protection advisory team (RAPAT) visit to Mexico took place in 1986. An ASSET (Assessment of Safety Significant Events) training mission is scheduled to visit Laguna Verde in March 1991. The role of NRC in these IAEA activities is to identify qualified experts, either in NRC or elsewhere in the United States, who may participate.

I am enclosing the names and addresses of contacts in Mexico and in the IAEA in case these are needed.

I hope this information is helpful to you in replying to Mr. Moody.

Sincerely,


James M. Taylor
Executive Director
for Operations

Enclosure:
As stated