



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

January 9, 1991

The Honorable Bob Graham
United States Senator
P.O. Box 3050
Tallahassee, FL 32315

Dear Senator Graham:

I am responding to your letter dated December 12, 1990, to Mr. Carlton Kammer, Director, State Programs, Office of Governmental and Public Affairs, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), in which you had enclosed a letter from Mr. Dean C. Baker, one of your constituents. The NRC also received the original letter from Mr. Baker on November 16, 1990 as a public comment on the proposed rule. In his letter, Mr. Baker raised objections to the proposed rule on the Emergency Response Data System (ERDS) because he believes it fails to demonstrate a safety benefit that could offset the costs of implementation.

The proposed rule requires operating nuclear power reactor licensees to participate in the ERDS program by providing a direct electronic link between a reactor site and the NRC Operations Center. In case of an emergency, the licensee would transmit critical plant information to the NRC Operations Center via ERDS. Currently, the licensee transmits such information through the Emergency Notification System (ENS) using telephone lines. The ERDS transmission will eliminate the need for human intervention, thus eliminating potential human error in the transmission and interpretation of this critical data. The more efficient and reliable automated data transmitted will substantially improve NRC's data gathering process and will allow the NRC to more effectively fulfill its response role during an emergency. The rule is also expected to allow the licensee to more effectively focus on the management and operational aspects of the emergency.

This proposed rule is based on a regulatory analysis that examined different alternatives, evaluated cost impact associated with the selected approach, and recommended the adoption of this rule. The regulatory analysis concluded that the rule would result in a significant increase in the level of protection provided to the health and safety of the public. The regulatory analysis is available for inspection in the NRC Public Document Room, 2120 L Street, NW, Washington, DC 20555. The notice of its availability was published along with the proposed rule. A copy of the regulatory analysis is enclosed for your information.

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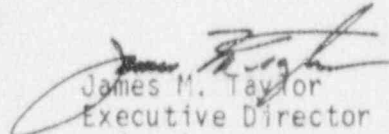
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We appreciate Mr. Baker's concerns and comments on the proposed rule, and we will give them full consideration. No final decision will be made to implement the proposed ERDS rule until all comments received during the comment period have been reviewed and analyzed by the NRC staff.

I trust that the above information is responsive to your request.

Sincerely,


James M. Taylor
Executive Director
for Operations

Enclosure:
Regulatory Analysis