



NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20555

May 9, 1977

OFFICE OF THE
SECRETARY

Mr. H. Mason Sizemore
Managing Editor
The Seattle Times
Fairfax Avenue North and John Street
Post Office Box 70
Seattle, Washington 98111

Dear Mr. Sizemore:

This responds to your letter of May 5, 1977, requesting permission to photograph the proceedings of the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board hearing scheduled for May 11, 1977, in Seattle, Washington. I must advise you that your request is denied.

As you know, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission in the past has adhered to a policy of allowing camera coverage before adjudicatory hearings formally commence and during recesses. Licensing Board Chairmen normally grant requests of cameramen for several minutes of "shooting time" immediately before the session is called to order. However, the operation of cameras during the actual proceedings has been prohibited as the Commission considers them to be a source of distraction which would do harm to the adjudicatory process. Radio broadcast, if nondisruptive, and the use of tape recorders is allowed. The evidence adduced at these hearings is frequently complex and may involve controverted issues. The Commission has determined that its policy best assures a fair hearing to all participants to the proceeding and fosters sound licensing decisions by the Board and ultimately by the Commission itself.

The Commission intends to take a fresh look at its policy concerning camera coverage of its adjudicatory proceedings in the near future. As part of such reconsideration, requests like yours which indicate a willingness and ability to photograph unobtrusively and without additional lighting will certainly be evaluated.

Sincerely,

Samuel J. Chalk
Secretary of the Commission