



CHAIRMAN

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

PDR  
50-271

January 17, 1992

The Honorable Richard E. Neal  
United States House of  
Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Neal:

I am responding to your letter of December 18, 1991, requesting a Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) investigation of an accident involving nuclear materials that occurred in Springfield, Massachusetts, on December 16, 1991. Under a Memorandum of Understanding between the NRC and the U.S. Department of Transportation, NRC is the lead agency for investigating accidents involving packages of radioactive material regulated by the NRC, such as those involved in the Springfield accident.

The truck was carrying unirradiated nuclear fuel assemblies from Wilmington, North Carolina, to the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Station in Vernon, Vermont. The nuclear fuel assemblies consist of sealed Zircaloy tubes containing low enriched uranium dioxide pellets. This material can be handled without special shielding and does not pose a significant health and safety hazard.

The NRC immediately commissioned a study of the circumstances of the accident, the damage that the shipping containers and their contents sustained, and the emergency response actions taken by local authorities.

We will provide you with the results of this study as soon as they become available.

Sincerely,

Ivan Selin

2/03/92