



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

September 15, 1995

The Honorable Robert A. Borski
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3803

Dear Congressman Borski:

Thank you for your letter of August 30, 1995, about your constituent's concerns regarding the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's (NRC's) intent to revise the process for licensing operators at nuclear power plants. Licensed operators play a crucial role in ensuring that our Nation's commercial nuclear facilities are operated safely, and we assure you that the changes being considered will only be implemented if the NRC concludes that they are not contrary to reactor safety. Presently the NRC determines the level of knowledge and abilities of candidates for operator licenses at power reactor facilities by conducting examinations developed entirely by the NRC. These examinations consist of a generic fundamentals written examination, a site-specific written examination, and a site-specific operating test using a control room simulator and a walk-through of the facility with the license candidate.

Although the final details are not yet fully defined, the NRC is planning to revise the operator licensing process so that the utilities will play a more active role in examining their license applicants. The NRC believes that the utilities' established training departments are capable of writing objective licensing examinations in accordance with detailed guidance and criteria from the NRC. Furthermore, the NRC expects that the utilities would be able to develop the examinations more efficiently than the NRC or its contractors because utility employees are more familiar with the plant's specific systems and procedures. Contrary to your constituent's concerns, the NRC will retain a participatory role in the examination process and NRC examiners will ensure that licensees maintain appropriate levels of quality and difficulty in the examinations. It is expected that NRC examiners will review each utility's proposed examinations in detail and directly participate in each examination. The NRC will continue to make the final licensing decisions based, in part, on the NRC examiners' independent observations.

The goal of revising the process for the licensing of operators is to achieve consistency with the Federal Government's ongoing efforts to reduce the financial burden placed on the private sector by Government regulation. The NRC's decision to revise the operator licensing process will allow the elimination of contractor support in this area, and will save the electric utilities and their customers an estimated \$3 to \$4 million per year in fees paid to the NRC. Although the revision to the operator licensing process will require more participation by the utilities, we expect the utilities to be more efficient in writing the examinations as discussed above, thereby achieving a net reduction in the effort needed to conduct examinations.

9509200235 950915
PDR ORG NE ED
PDR

RETURN TO REGULATORY CENTRAL FILES

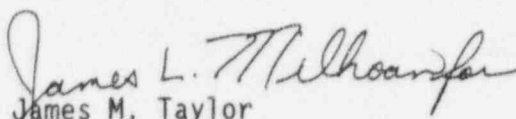
1031
OTM-3-Licensing Regulation
X-IP-2-Requests & Acknowledgments
X-OTM-8-Reports to Congress

Congressman Borski

-2-

Please be assured that the NRC will implement a revised examination process that includes sufficient NRC participation and oversight to ensure that license applicants demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to carry out the responsibilities of a licensed operator.

Sincerely,


James M. Taylor
Executive Director for Operations

Congressman Borski

-2-

Please be assured that the NRC will implement a revised examination process that includes sufficient NRC participation and oversight to ensure that license applicants demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to carry out the responsibilities of a licensed operator.

Sincerely,

Original Signed by:

James L. Milhoan *JLM*

James M. Taylor
Executive Director for Operations

DISTRIBUTION: GREEN TICKET #0000629

Central Files

EDO #0000629

JTaylor, EDO

HOLB RF

SECY #CRC-95-0771

JMilhoan, EDO

PUBLIC

RZimmerman, ADPR

HThompson, EDO

KBohrer (0-12 G18)

DCrutchfield, ADAR

JBlaha, EDO

DOCUMENT NAME: G:\BORSKI.LTR

*See Previous Concurrence

To receive a copy of this document, indicate in the box: "C" = Copy without attachment/enclosure "E" = Copy with attachment/enclosure "N" = No copy

OFFICE	HOLB/DRCH*	C	DIR/DRCH*	C	DIR/NRR*	ED0			
NAME	SRichards:lv/rc		BBoger/eb		WRussell	JTaylor			<i>OSN</i>
DATE	09/08/95 <i>9/12/95</i>		09/08/95		09/11/95	09/14/95			<i>9/15/95</i>

OFFICIAL RECORD COPY

Congressman Borski

-2-

Please be assured that the NRC will implement a revised examination process that includes sufficient NRC participation and oversight to ensure that license applicants demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to carry out the responsibilities of a licensed operator.

Sincerely,

James M. Taylor
Executive Director for Operations

DISTRIBUTION: GREEN TICKET #0000629

Central Files

HOLB RF

PUBLIC

KBohrer (O-12 G18)

EDO #0000629

SECY #CRC-95-0771

RZimmerman, ADPR

DCrutchfield, ADAR

JTaylor, EDO

JMilhoan, EDO

HThompson, EDO

JBlaha, EDO

DOCUMENT NAME: G:\BORSKI.LTR

To receive a copy of this document, indicate in the box: "C" = Copy without attachment/enclosure "E" = Copy with attachment/enclosure "N" = No copy

OFFICE	HOLB/DRCH	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	DIR/DRCH	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	DIR/NRR	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	EDO	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
NAME	SRichards:tv/rc		BBoger		WRussell		JTaylor		
DATE	09/8/95		09/8/95		09/11/95		09/ /95		

OFFICIAL RECORD COPY

P.O.
9/11

ROBERT A. BORSKI
3D DISTRICT, PENNSYLVANIA

COMMITTEES:
TRANSPORTATION
AND INFRASTRUCTURE
RANKING DEMOCRAT—SUBCOMMITTEE ON
WATER RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT

STEERING COMMITTEE

REGIONAL WHIP

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

August 30, 1995

WASHINGTON OFFICE
ROOM 2182
RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BLDG.
(202) 225-8251
FAX: (202) 225-4628

DISTRICT OFFICES:
7141 FRANKFORD AVE.
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19135
(215) 335-3355
FAX: (215) 333-4508
2630 MEMPHIS ST.
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19125
(215) 425-4616

Mr. Dennis Rathbun
Director, Congressional Affairs
Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Mail Stop 17A3
Washington, D.C. 20555

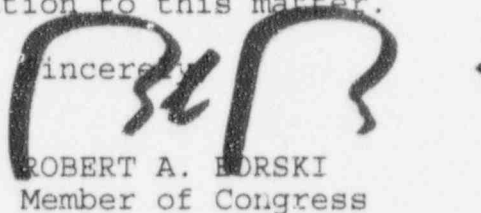
Dear Mr. Rathbun:

I am writing to you on behalf of my constituent, Mr. Matt Buenaflor, who is concerned about a proposed rule changing the oversight responsibilities of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) on nuclear power plants.

I have enclosed a copy of the correspondence I recently received from Mr. Buenaflor. I would appreciate if you would investigate this matter and provide me with the information necessary for reply.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,


ROBERT A. BORSKI
Member of Congress

RAB/rcs
Enclosure

Matt Buenaflor
3410 Emerald Street
Philadelphia, PA 19134
(215) 743 1725

8/2/95

The Honorable Robert Borski
Capitol Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman,

I'm writing to you to express my opposition to a coming Nuclear Regulatory Commission rule change that has as its purpose to pull the NRC out of the business of examining the operators of commercial nuclear power plants. I have about 11 years experience in that industry and I very much oppose the rule.

Briefly, it isn't yet time to allow this particular industry to police itself. The nuclear electric utilities enjoy legal limitations on legal liability, and they are insulated from other profit motives that normally make other businesses careful to work towards safety and to avoid extreme waste. Such companies are assured of extremely sizeable profits as long as their plants are operating and are disposed to absorb an awful lot of waste (I've run across as much as a probable \$100 million,) as long as nothing interferes with the plants' operation.

Without the regulatory standards and enforcement proactively, there doesn't arise an atmosphere that is conducive to finding basic qualification and training problems.

In a more technical vein, the infrastructure of the commercial nuclear industry consists of dozens of uniquely designed plants that are operated by dozens of individual companies. Without the professional regulatory cadre that follows such situations on a continuous basis we're not doing ourselves a service for safety or efficient management.

As near as I can get out of NRC people, the proposed rule change is expected to surface in August, September or October of this year. I'm all for trimming fat from government, and there may indeed be more cost-effective ways for the NRC to fulfill its examination duties. However to eliminate the external standards that all of the plants must meet could leave us with a situation where each of the local plants, Limerick, Peach Bottom, Salem, Oyster Creek, et. al. , -- when we ask how we know that their operators are competent, can answer "we don't have to tell you, ask our management," and then the management can then tell us (even a man in your position,) "we'll let you know."

Sincerely,

