

PDR



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

November 30, 1995

The Honorable Joseph I. Lieberman
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Lieberman:

I am writing concerning actions the Nuclear Regulatory Commission will take in response to the findings of our Office of Inspector General (OIG) regarding refueling activities at Millstone Unit 1. OIG has briefed me, the senior management of the NRC staff, and your staff on separate occasions on its findings.

The IG found that the NRC regional staff was aware of the licensee's practice of offloading the entire core at Millstone Unit 1 during refueling outages; however, the staff told the IG that it was not aware that this practice was inconsistent with the normal discharge scenario outlined in the Final Safety Analysis Report (FSAR). The IG determined that the NRC headquarters staff had opportunities to evaluate the Northeast Utilities' refueling practices but did not conduct such evaluations. The IG did not uncover any evidence that NRC staff conspired with the licensee to cover up matters related to the refueling process at Millstone Unit 1.

Nevertheless, I believe attention should have been focused on the Millstone refueling practices sooner, and I have asked the Executive Director for Operations and the General Counsel to prepare a lessons-learned report. A copy of my request is enclosed. My purpose in this request is to explore whether existing oversight processes need improvement or new processes need to be developed which would have produced earlier NRC recognition of and action on Millstone Unit 1 refueling issues. I have asked the staff to re-examine the adequacy of the regulatory framework that authorizes licensees to make changes to their facilities without the prior approval of the NRC. I have requested the staff's recommendation to include the respective roles that the NRC's Headquarters, Regional and Resident Inspection Programs should have in the review of 10 CFR 50.59 changes and monitoring of licensee's adherence to FSAR commitments. I have also asked for NRC staff recommendations on ways to improve NRC's regulatory response both in quality and timeliness for instances similar to the Millstone Unit 1 core offload situation and for the NRC technical and legal staff's advice on determining an appropriate role for public involvement for situations where there are substantial public concerns.

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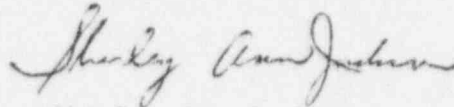
Related to the specific lessons-learned activities resulting from these IG findings is an earlier request I have made of the EDO concerning a systematic reconsideration and re-evaluation of the way NRC reviews facility changes pursuant to 10 CFR 50.59. A copy of this request is also enclosed.

There remain questions in your letter that I cannot yet address since the OI investigation is still underway. When complete, OI's findings will be part of the NRC's deliberations on issues that may be subject to escalated enforcement consideration. Any enforcement activity would include an enforcement conference with the licensee to discuss such issues. Any enforcement conference resulting from the refueling issues will be open to the public, be held in the Millstone area, and include a period for the NRC staff to take questions from the public.

I do note that the Acting Inspector General has agreed to hold a public meeting in New London, Connecticut, on December 5, 1995, to discuss his findings. I appreciate his willingness to take this unusual step in further attempt to address the concerns of the local residents on this matter.

The NRC staff will closely monitor activities at Millstone during this outage. I will keep you informed on the progress of these activities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Shirley Ann Jackson".

Shirley Ann Jackson

Enclosure:
As Stated