



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

OFFICE OF THE
COMMISSIONER

December 6, 1984

DOCKETED
US NRC

MEMORANDUM FOR: Files

FROM: Patricia P. Davis, Legal Assistant 7D
Office of Commissioner Asselstine

SUBJECT: CATAWBA PROCEEDING

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On December 5, 1984, I spoke with residents of the Charlotte, North Carolina area who expressed concerns about the fact that the Catawba plant is scheduled to go critical on Saturday, December 8, 1984:

Marjorie Welles - Charlotte, N.C.

Ms. Welles asked if I knew that the Catawba plant was scheduled to go critical and up to 5% power on Saturday. She said she was very concerned about this because the plant is only 10 miles from Charlotte, N.C., where she lives.

Ms. Welles told me that Duke Power's own investigation had found four sensitized welds, and that there has been no independent study of this problem. She said that the Brookhaven study just relied on the report of the Duke Power metallurgist so that this could not be termed an "independent" study. She said that Duke had explained that the sensitized welds were not a problem because they would leak before they would break and could be found and repaired. Ms. Welles does not find this persuasive because leaks can go undetected and the pipe would break before anyone could do anything about it. She said that should an accident occur and the wind blow toward Charlotte, which it does a large percentage of the time, by the NRC's estimates thousands of people could be affected. Ms. Welles thinks there ought to be an independent study of the welds issue before the plant is allowed to start.

Ms. Welles also told me that the Catawba plant already has 15 or 16 LER's, and it hasn't even started. She expressed concern about the safety of the plant given this number of LER's.

Ms. Welles also told me that there are three nuclear plants in the Charlotte area with a fourth scheduled. She thinks that is an unreasonable concentration for a city the size of Charlotte. She said that people in the area near Catawba are planning to move because Catawba is suspect and that people believe it to be especially hazardous.

Ms. Welles said that the reason she called was because Commissioner Asselstine had shown some intelligence, and she hoped that he could help.

I told her that the Commissioner would be considering Catawba within the next few weeks and that Commissioner Asselstine would consider objectively all of the information in the record in making his decision on whether to allow Catawba to operate above 5% power.

Sharon Duggan - Charlotte, N.C.

Ms. Duggan told me that she was concerned about the fact that the Catawba plant is scheduled to go critical on Saturday. She said that during the licensing proceeding evidence was presented that there were suspect welds in the plant. She said that after the plant goes critical those welds will be irradiated and will be harder to repair or inspect so that something should be done before the plant begins operation.

Ms. Duggan is particularly distressed that there had not been an independent study of the weld problem as GAP had requested. She said that the NRC had merely accepted the Duke Power study, and had concluded there was no widespread problem. She said that out of 25 welds 3-6 sensitized welds had been found. She believes that there shouldn't be any sensitized welds because sensitization will lead to brittleness and cracking. She wants the Commission to conduct or arrange for an independent study before Saturday or before criticality.

Ms. Duggan also wants the Commission to talk to Darrell Eisenhut about the problems with Catawba. She thinks the Regional office has just been looking the other way and not addressing the problems at the plant. Ms. Duggan again requested that the Commissioners personally look into the matter and order an independent study before allowing the plant to go critical.

I told Ms. Duggan that I would put her concerns into a memorandum to be served on all the parties to the Catawba proceeding, to be placed in the public docket of the proceeding and to be circulated to all the Commissioners. I also told her that the Commission would be considering full power for Catawba within the next few weeks.