UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

CHAIRMAN

December 18, 1996

The Honorable Dan Schaefer, Chairman
Subcommittee on Energy and Power
Committee on Commerce
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has approved rules certifying two evolutionary reactor designs. These are the ASEA Brown Boveri-Combustion Engineering System 80+ and General Electric Nuclear Energy's Advanced Boiling Water Reactor.

Previously, reactor designs were generally approved by the NRC's Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation as part of the licensing process for a specific plant rather than by rulemaking. This new process gives industry an option to seek approval by rulemaking for a generic reactor design. A standard reactor design permits a utility to apply for a combined license in place of the historical two-step process involving separate proceedings at both the construction permit and operating license stages. These designs are for nuclear power facilities capable of producing about 1300 megawatts of electricity, which is slightly more power than the largest reactors in use by industry today.

NRC invited public comment on the proposed rules and environmental assessments covering design certification, and provided an opportunity to request an informal hearing before an Atomic Safety and Licensing Board. Also, NRC conducted a series of public meetings for the purpose of clarifying the provisions of the rules and affording the public opportunity for comments. We are now in the process of preparing the final rules to be published in the Federal Register next year.

Sincerely,

Shirley Ann Jackson

Shirley Ann Jackson

cc: Representative Frank Pallone

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Comms Ltr per Doris Mossburg-