



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

FEB 26 1988

50-341

The Honorable William S. Broomfield
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515-2218

Dear Congressman Broomfield:

Thank you for your letter transmitting concerns raised by one of your constituents, Mr. John M. Roberts. Mr. Roberts' concerns stem from newspaper articles that appeared in the Detroit Free Press and the Oakland Press.

The article in the Detroit Free Press cited claims that the Fermi-2 nuclear power plant is badly designed, that its management has a poor safety attitude, and that its reactor operators are inexperienced. The article mentions a 1985 incident where an operator started a nuclear chain reaction without knowing it.

In 1985, the NRC shared some of the same concerns that are expressed in the newspaper article. The operator error cited in the article resulted in a civil penalty of \$300,000, one of the largest civil penalties ever imposed by the NRC. In addition, the Commission issued an Order to the Fermi-2 licensee, the Detroit Edison Company (DECo). The Order set forth a number of concerns regarding the operation of Fermi-2 and required DECo to address the following:

1. The adequacy of management, management structures and systems that had contributed to the poor performance of Fermi-2.
2. The adequacy of training to ensure that responsible personnel recognized and appropriately responded to significant safety conditions.
3. Changes in control needed to ensure that Fermi-2 would better meet the NRC's regulatory requirements.
4. Actions planned to ensure that the plant is ready for restart and for readiness of the facility to support increasing power after testing is completed at each power ascension plateau. (The Commission imposed hold points in power increases at 20%, 50%, and 75%.)
5. A review of the management and system performance at each power ascension plateau, including who will perform the review, objective criteria for determining adequacy of performance at each plateau, and the manager who will authorize proceeding to the next plateau.
6. Actions planned to improve regulatory and operational performance during and after the startup testing phase of operation.

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In response to the NRC's order, management changes at Fermi-2 have occurred and officers with nuclear experience have been hired. DECo has formed an independent overview committee to provide corporate management with an evaluation of operation of Fermi-2. A security improvement program was begun. Finally, DECo, in compliance with the Commission's Order, committed to resolving system and equipment problems and to conducting a comprehensive control room monitoring plan that would allow corporate management to assess, in detail, control room performance.

As a result of the actions initiated by DECo, the NRC allowed Fermi-2 to restart and closely monitored the controlled power ascension program. On December 15, 1987, the NRC approved DECo's request for operation at 100% power, removing the last hold point. While the NRC believes that DECo has taken the proper steps to improve performance, we are continuing to closely monitor the effectiveness of DECo's management and its ability to implement the programs necessary to improve the performance of the plant.

Mr. Roberts also expressed concerns about safety standards at nuclear power plants in the U.S. since the Chernobyl disaster. The NRC believes that no immediate changes are needed in the NRC's regulations regarding the design or operation of commercial nuclear reactors in the United States. Nuclear design, shutdown margin, containment, and operational controls at reactors in the United States protect them against a combination of lapses such as those experienced at Chernobyl. Although the NRC has always acknowledged the possibility of major accidents, our regulatory requirements provide adequate protection against the risks, subject to (1) continuing vigilance for any new information that may suggest particular weaknesses and (2) continuing measures to ensure compliance with the requirements.

Assessments made in the light of Chernobyl have indicated that the causes of the accident have been largely anticipated and accommodated for in the design of commercial reactors in the United States. Nonetheless, the Chernobyl accident reminds us of the continuing importance of safe design in both concept and implementation; of operational controls; of the competence and motivation of plant management and operating staff to operate in strict compliance with controls; and of backup features of defense-in-depth against potential accidents.

I hope this will be helpful to you in your responding to Mr. Roberts. If we can be of any further assistance, please let us know.

Sincerely,

(Signed) T. A. Rehm

Victor Stello, Jr.
Executive Director
for Operations

See Previous Concurrence*

PM/PD31:DRSP* TECH ED*

TQuay:lt
02/09/88 02/09/88

DMR
TMurley
02/11/88

EDO
VStello
02/16/88

D/PD31:DRSP*
MVirgilio
02/09/88

GPA/CA
02/22/88

AD:DRSP*
GHolahan
02/10/88

OGE
02/12/88

D:DRSP*
DCrutchfield
02/10/88

ADP*
FMiraglia
02/10/88

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DONRR EDO
TMurley VStello
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TMurley	VStello		
02/ /88	02/ /88	02/ /88	02/ /88

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Docket File
NRC & Local PDR
EDO # 003442
EDO Reading
T. Murley
F. Miraglia
PD31 Green Ticket File w/copy of incoming
D. Crutchfield
G. Holahan
OGC
GPA/CA (3)
SECY (3) (Control Ticket No. 88-46)
V. Stello
A. Bert Davis, Region III
D. Mossburg (EDO NO. 003442)
P. Shea
R. Ingram

MEMORANDUM
OF CALL

Previous editions usable

TO: WCP

YOU WERE CALLED BY— YOU WERE VISITED BY—
L. Chandler

OF (Organization)

PLEASE PHONE ► FTS AUTOVON

WILL CALL AGAIN IS WAITING TO SEE YOU
 RETURNED YOUR CALL WISHES AN APPOINTMENT
MESSAGE

Murray, Olmstead, and Chandler have
no legal objections to the attached.
OK for your concurrence.

RECEIVED BY	DATE	TIME
Ann	2/25	11:15am

63-110 NSN 7540-00-634-4018 U.S. GPO: 1987-181-246/40024
STANDARD FORM 63 (Rev. 8-81)
Prescribed by GSA
FPMR (41 CFR) 101-11.6



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

DRSP

ACTION

EDD PRINCIPAL CORRESPONDENCE CONTROL

FROM: REP. WILLIAM S. BROOMFIELD

2/12
DUE: 02/09/88

EDD CONTROL: 003442
DOC DT: 01/11/88
FINAL REPLY:

TO: CHAIRMAN ZECH

FOR SIGNATURE OF: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

** GREEN **

SECY NO: 88-46

DESC: ENCLOSURE LETTER FROM JOHN M. ROBERTS RE FERMI II

ROUTING: DAVIS
MURRAY

DATE: 01/26/88
ASSIGNED TO: NRR CONTACT: MURLEY

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS OR REMARKS:

NRR RECEIVED: JANUARY 27, 1988
ACTION: DRSP:CRUTCHFIELD

NRR ROUTING: MURLEY/SNIEZEK
MIRAGLIA
ADT
GILLESPIE
MOSSBURG

ACTION
DUE TO NRR DIRECTOR'S OFFICE
BY Selman 12/4/1988

