



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

*NRC 102*

SEP 26 1980

Mrs. Frederick E. Wilde  
5 Woodlawn Avenue  
Hampton Falls, New Hampshire 03844

Dear Mrs. Wilde:

Your letter to Mr. Wayne Kerr, Director Office of State Programs, U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, related to evacuation plans for areas surrounding the Seabrook Station has been referred to me for reply. You expressed concerns about the potential consequences of nuclear accidents to you as a nearby resident and then explained your further concern that decisions regarding the Seabrook Station may not be in accordance with your vote.

Under the present statutes, the NRC has developed a detailed set of regulations and procedures for use in determining whether a proposed nuclear power plant will be constructed and operated in accordance with the statutes, and hence whether it can be licensed. Construction permits for the Seabrook Station were issued on July 7, 1976 after a detailed review by the NRC staff and an extensive hearing in which many members of the public made statements for the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board ("Licensing Board") to consider. Other local groups intervened with specific contentions on which the Licensing Board considered and ruled. Decisions of the Licensing Board were reviewed by the Atomic Safety and Licensing Appeal Board and by the Commission. Before an operating license can be issued, members of the local public will again be afforded an opportunity to participate and intervene as a party to the proceeding. Through these procedures, concerns of local citizens are taken into consideration in licensing decisions of the NRC. However, they must be considered along with many other factors, including the need for electrical power by a widely distributed population.

During the construction permit review and hearing for the Seabrook Station, population density around the site and evacuation feasibility were evaluated and considered. The Commission ruled that decisions on the acceptability of emergency plans for evacuation beyond the low population zone could be deferred to the operating license stage of review.

Since construction permits were issued for the Seabrook Station, the Commission has and is continuing to reassess its regulations for inclusion of results of its continuing review of operating reactor experience, and in particular the accident at Three Mile Island Unit 2 on March 28, 1979. Regulations on emergency planning have been expanded to include requirements for evacuation planning to distances of about 10 miles. The Commission has also directed the staff to take steps to identify plants under construction where either additional features or other actions might be

THIS DOCUMENT CONTAINS  
POOR QUALITY PAGES

8010100 110

H

warranted which could prevent or mitigate the consequences of serious accidents. As an example, such additional features or other actions may be warranted when evacuation of the general population is taken into consideration.

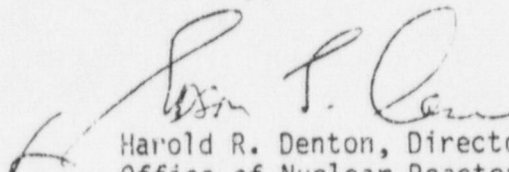
The staff's review of Seabrook relative to expanded emergency planning requirements began a year ago. Reviews by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) are also underway. Results from both reviews will be considered in reaching a decision on issuance of operating licenses. Thus, the NRC staff does not consider the difficulty of evacuation planning as the only criterion in licensing decisions. As already indicated, other criteria include the acceptability of features to prevent and mitigate the consequences of serious accidents.

It should also be noted that during the operating license review, it is the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's policy to hold selected meetings in the area of the plant site where the public will be invited to attend and to participate in the form of questions and comments during selected portions of these meetings.

I trust that this discussion helps you to understand that regulations and procedures do exist, and are being reassessed, to assure that evacuation planning and other plant features will be thoroughly reviewed and evaluated prior to a decision on issuance of operating licenses for the Seabrook Station.

Thank you for expressing your concerns.

Sincerely,



Handwritten signature of Harold R. Denton in cursive script.

Harold R. Denton, Director  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation