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aspect of the licensing process, which obviously would add witnesses to and materially lengthen the evidentiary hearings.

Involving ACRS members or consultants in licensing proceedings would inevitably require time commitments from them in preparing for and attending evidentiary hearings. It might also lengthen the ACRS meetings because the parties, knowing that the ACRS's findings could become evidentiary in the licensing proceeding, might seek to make more detailed presentations to the ACRS. In effect, the ACRS meetings could become a dress rehearsal for the evidentiary hearing.

What would be the consequences of such increased time demands on ACRS members or consultants? Would they divert time and energy from their present ACRS duties, thereby adversely affecting their advice to the NRC, especially on those topics generically affecting nuclear plants where the ACRS's review is unique? Would they have less time to spend on their non-ACRS activities to the detriment of their expertise. Would they become less independent? Would some resign and equally qualified replacements be difficult to obtain? These inquiries are, of course, best answered by the ACRS and its consultants. We perceive, however, that involvement in licensing proceedings with the accompanying increased time demands raises the possibility of interfering with the functioning and eroding the quality of the ACRS and hence the quality of its advice to the NRC.

The highly commendable purpose of the ACRS is to provide expert technical advice to the NRC, thereby serving to some extent as an independent check and balance on the judgments of the NRC Staff. As previously explained, this purpose could be threatened if ACRS members and consultants were exposed to being called as witnesses in licensing proceedings. At the same time, we cannot foresee any gains from involving the ACRS in the licensing proceeding. With no gains to offset the potential detriment, we oppose the generic question that you have posed.

You have asked us to comment on a general proposition. If this matter is to be further pursued, which we do not think it should be, there are other questions that come to mind. For example, who, if anyone, would be qualified or should be authorized to testify on behalf of the ACRS? Would

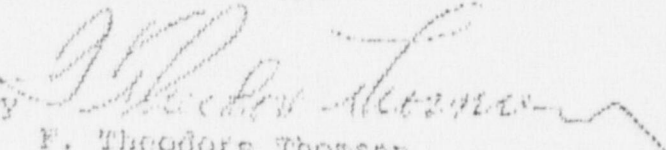
Mr. Samuel J. Chirk  
October 31, 1978  
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there be any limitations on the scope of testimony by a witness, such as prohibiting inquiry into the ACRS decision-making process? Can a distinction be made between calling an ACRS consultant and an ACRS member, both of whom may have expertise on a particular matter? These questions suggest to us that any further pursuit of this general subject should be by means of an informal rulemaking proceeding. Such a procedure would best allow the identification and consideration of all relevant subsidiary questions and would permit a more comprehensive statement of any policy that may be adopted.

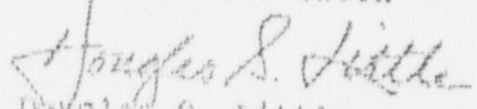
Sincerely yours,

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BY

  
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Puget Sound Power & Light Company

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

In the Matter of )  
 )  
PUGET SOUND POWER & LIGHT COMPANY, ) Docket Nos. STN 50-522  
ET AL. ) STN 50-523  
 )  
(Skagit Nuclear Power Project, )  
Units 1 and 2) )

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that copies of a

Letter from Perkins, Coie, Stone, Olsen & Williams,  
Counsel for Applicant Puget Sound Power & Light  
Company, to Samuel J. Chilk, dated October 31, 1978

have been served on the following by depositing the same in the  
United States mail, postage prepaid, on the 31st day of October,  
1978, except that copies thereof have been served this same day on  
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commissioners by hand delivery to Commission  
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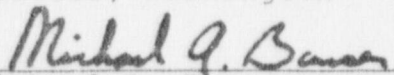
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