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February 10, 1987

Mr. Lando W. Zech, Jr., Chairman  
Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Zech:

I am outraged to read in the Lowell Sun, Friday, February 6th, that "The staff of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission has drafted a proposal that would permit the agency to license nuclear plants like those in Shoreham, N.Y., and Seabrook, N.H., for full operation over the objections of state or local authorities." Even more outrageous is the thought that "The rule change would allow the Commission to waive its requirement that state and local authorities participate in plans to evacuate people in a 10-mile zone around a nuclear power plant in the event of an emergency."

The Sun article refers to you as "a retired admiral of the Nuclear Navy." Having enjoyed numerous conversations with a recent Annapolis graduate who was particularly interested in nuclear power, I realize that naval nuclear capabilities are most certainly under tighter supervision than our civilian nuclear plants. Accidents, near accidents, and substance abuse among civilian plant employees are a matter of historical record. We, the American public, have felt protected by the above rules which you now propose to change. I sincerely hope that before you remove these safeguards you will consider seriously the erosion of quality control and weakened sense of responsibility so sadly evident in industry in general at this period in American history.

As a high school teacher I am further alarmed at this action by a federal regulatory agency because I question the constitutionality of overriding what I perceive as powers reserved to the states. Such action seems particularly inappropriate under an administration that has repeatedly tossed responsibilities that had a price tag back into state and local government laps. If we as states, cities and towns must pay the bills, then surely we have the right to approve the way in which things are done, most certainly when it involves our safety and/or health.

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Members of our extended family (Mass. and N.H.) join me in applauding Governor Dukakis's stand on the Seabrook plant issue. We hope you will show more considered leadership and not make rule changes that, frankly, we fear.

Sincerely yours,

*Carolyn B. Wiljanen*

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cc: Rep. Edward J. Markey  
Sen. John F. Kerry  
Sen. Edward M. Kennedy

P.S. While this letter was with a daughter for typing The Lowell Sun, February 12, reported an "unusual event" at the Seabrook plant. Through negligence a valve was incorrectly set. Had the plant been fully operative, the reactor would have had to be shut down!  
I rest my case.