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14TH DISTRICT TEXAS
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
INVESTIGATIONS
RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT
COMMITTEE ON MERCHANT MARINE
AND FISHERIES
COAST GUARD
AND MARITIME
POLLUTION AND WILDLIFE
CONSERVATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT
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March 21, 1988

Lando W. Zech, Jr.
Chairman
Nuclear Regulatory Commission
1717 H Street
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Zech:

This letter is to inform the Nuclear Regulatory Commission that I support without qualification the granting of a full power license to the South Texas Project (STP).

Any delay in licensing at this stage will serve no benefit, will not increase safety, and will unnecessarily penalize the utility's customers and the partners in the plant.

With the STP located in my Congressional District, not only have I seen the progress of the plant over the years, but also my constituents built it, operated and live near it.

NRC staff members have briefed me thoroughly on all technical issues involved in the plant's operation, allowing the conclusion that today no technically-based safety concerns exist at the plant.

On the separate issue of personnel-related problems, the NRC staff has assured me that the allegations made by the Government Accountability Project, which are currently being reviewed by the NRC's Office of Investigation, will not raise any technical concerns impacting on the plant's operations. This review as you know, revolves around issues fundamentally unrelated to safety--issues such as sexual harassment, time card falsification, and drug use.

Providing further endorsement of the technical integrity of the STP, the design of the plant itself ensures that any operational constraints will be identified and remedied during testing leading up to full power operation, even after licensing.

With the resolution of all technically-based safety matters and the existence of an elaborate array of operational checks and balances, any eleventh hour allegations against licensing must be viewed skeptically. This includes Government Accountability Project (GAP), an organization both opposed to the generation of nuclear power itself and renowned for its last minute attacks of nuclear power plant safety.

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PDR COMMS NRCC
CORRESPONDENCE PDR

To be sure, if GAP can precisely identify and convincingly substantiate any safety concerns it has, then it has an immediate moral obligation to do so. In the absence of such substantiation and hard documentation, GAP's continuing allegations have to be judged repetitive, unsupportable and presumptively irresponsible.

The negative consequence of GAP's continued innuendo-making is to cast doubt where no doubt should exist in the minds of my constituents about the safety of the plant. This too is irresponsible.

If GAP seeks to find the appropriate forum to display its opposition to nuclear power generation in this country, then I would suggest that forum to be the halls and appropriate subcommittees of the Congress, not a NRC hearing on licensing. To use the process of licensing as a means to air deep-seated grievances about the very generation of nuclear power itself is to revisit a debate fully thrashed out more than two decades ago--a debate, that is, about the utility of nuclear power itself, not about compliance with licensing requirements.

The plant's operators have demonstrated compliance with licensing regulations. They have done so in good faith while also facing down constantly any and all allegations and innuendos about this specific plant.

I have visited the plant several times; I have participated in a number of meetings on the issue of the plant's operation; I have been briefed extensively on all aspects of the STP; and I have talked to hundreds of residents throughout the area about the plant.

Once again, I support without qualification the NRC's granting of a full power license to the South Texas Project.

Sincerely,



Mac Sweeney
Member of Congress



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 21, 1988

Press Contact: Laura Epstein

WASHINGTON -- Predicting the South Texas Project (STP) would soon be operating at full power, U.S. Congressman Mac Sweeney delivered a strong letter of endorsement today to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) prior to the final licensing hearing.

"My concerns about technical safety problems at the STP were completely dispelled by NRC officials last week," he said. "The NRC has conducted an exhaustive investigation that covered all potential problems with design, construction and equipment at the plant."

The Congressman also questioned the Government Accountability Project (GAP) for their continuing and to date unsubstantiated allegations, which he said only create doubt where no doubt should exist in the minds of his constituents. "To be sure, if GAP can precisely identify and convincingly substantiate any safety concerns it has then it has an immediate moral obligation to do so," Sweeney said. "In the absence of such substantiation and hard documentation, GAP's continuing allegations have to be judged repetitive, untrustworthy and presumptively irresponsible."

Sweeney said that if GAP can substantiate any of their allegations they are morally obligated to do so.

Sweeney praised those who worked to make STP a reality, saying, "With the granting of a full-power license, the dedication and hard work of literally thousands of people from Matagorda County and the greater Houston area will finally pay off."