



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

PDR

April 25, 1988

The Honorable Edward J. Markey
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Markey:

This responds to your letter of March 3, 1988, in which you requested an investigation of drug and alcohol-related matters at the Seabrook nuclear power plant. I can assure you that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is both aware of and concerned about allegations of drug and alcohol use at the Seabrook site. The NRC investigates allegations related to substance abuse at any nuclear power plant when they are reported to us. Our primary responsibility, however, is to ensure that the plant is constructed in a safe manner and does not pose a threat to public health and safety. Illegal behavior of on-site personnel is of concern to the NRC to the extent it affects construction or operation of the licensed facility.

The NRC staff has been aware of many of the allegations concerning drug and alcohol use during construction of Seabrook. In particular, the staff of our Region I office has been aware of the concrete testing company allegations since September 1987, and is still investigating this matter. The staff has also carefully reviewed your recent investigation report and found no new issues that had not already been considered in the staff's overall conclusion on construction quality at Seabrook.

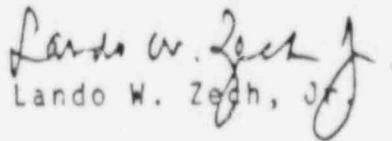
NRC expects its licensees to have a vigorous fitness-for-duty program and to strive for a drug-free work site, but we do not rely exclusively on such a program to ensure that a plant has been constructed safely. The NRC requires each licensee to have a comprehensive quality assurance program to find and correct construction deficiencies from any cause, including possible worker fitness-related causes. We verify the effectiveness of the licensee's quality assurance program through frequent, detailed, on-site inspections throughout the construction period. In addition, NRC sends its own team of experts to make independent measurements of the quality of welds, concrete, and other construction items. More than 26,000 hours of NRC inspection have been expended at Seabrook, and it is primarily on the basis of that independent inspection effort that we have concluded that the Seabrook plant has been constructed safely.

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You raised a concern about the licensee's compliance with the reporting requirements of 10 CFR Part 21. For plants under construction, the licensee is required to report situations where there are safety deficiencies that meet the definitions of 10 CFR Part 50.55(e) or 10 CFR Part 21. In making such reports, the licensee is required to identify the defects and the root cause for such defects. Should there be a connection of the defect with drug use, the licensee would be obligated to identify such use as contributing to the cause of such defects. The staff has requested the licensee to provide answers to a series of questions developed in coordination with our Office of Investigations (see enclosed letter). In its reply, we expect that the licensee will also address the specific recommendations contained in your report.

We will keep you informed of the progress and results of our examination of this matter.

Sincerely,


Lando W. Zech, Jr.

Enclosure:
As Stated

cc: The Honorable Morris K. Udall
The Honorable Philip R. Sharp