

Official

OCT 07 1988

✓ Mr. Dennis J. Hoffarth
152 Flora Avenue, N.E.
Atlanta, Georgia 30307

Dear Mr. Hoffarth:

This is in response to your letter to Dr. J. Nelson Grace, dated August 31, 1988, in which you expressed concerns related to the Georgia Tech Research Reactor resuming operations and requested a hearing in this regard. Your request implies a concern regarding the ability of Georgia Tech to operate their reactor safely. The NRC shares your safety interest, and reasonable assurance of safe operation will be obtained by the NRC prior to allowing the Georgia Tech Reactor to restart. It is for this very reason that we issued an Order on January 20, 1988, to cease irradiation experiments and a Confirmatory Order on March 17, 1988, to cease reactor operations until all safety questions had been resolved to the NRC's satisfaction and the NRC approved resumption of operations.

When the NRC issued the Confirmatory Order on March 17, any party adversely affected by that Order was afforded an opportunity within twenty days of the date of the Order to request a public hearing. As no such request was filed within the required time, no hearing is required to be held. More importantly, the safety aspects of operating the reactor were all carefully reviewed at the time of licensing, and none of those considerations have been changed. The thrust of our efforts over the past few months have been to improve certain management and administrative practices that have deteriorated over time, and these issues will be resolved prior to giving our permission for restart. Thus, because of the relatively narrow, well-defined focus of the issues at hand, a hearing would not be useful from a safety standpoint. For these two reasons, we are denying your request.

We appreciate your interest and will be pleased to respond to any specific concerns you may have.

Sincerely,

Malcolm L. Ernst
Acting Regional Administrator

cc: ✓ Dr. Ratib A. Karam, Director
Neely Nuclear Research Center
✓ A. P. Sheppard, Acting Vice
President for Research
State of Georgia

bcc: (See page 2)

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Mr. Dennis J. Hoffarth

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bcc: Document Control Desk
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✓ A. Adams, NRR

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