

EDWARD J. MARKEY
7TH DISTRICT, MASSACHUSETTS

COMMITTEES
ENERGY AND COMMERCE
CHAIRMAN
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND
FINANCE
INTERIOR AND INSULAR
AFFAIRS
COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND
COOPERATION IN EUROPE

2133 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BLDG.
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-2836

DISTRICT OFFICE
300A JOHN F. KENNEDY BUILDING
BOSTON, MA 02203
(617) 585-2900

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

May 17, 1988

Lando W. Zech, Jr.
Chairman
Nuclear Regulatory Commission
1717 H Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20555

Dear Chairman Zech:

I am writing to express my concern about the licensing of South Texas Nuclear Plant (STNP). A large number of allegations concerning the safe operation of STNP have been made by more than 50 workers involved in the construction of this plant.

Although a number of these allegations were recently reviewed, the vast majority remain unaddressed by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. As you know, I hold the NRC responsible for determining the safety of a nuclear plant. It is not the job of the public to prove that a problem might exist; it is the job of the NRC to demonstrate that a plant is completely safe to operate.

There are still approximately 360 allegations of faulty workmanship, mismanagement, violations of site procedures, and specific breakdowns in particular areas of construction which remain uninvestigated. Not only are each of the individual issues potentially significant, but the sheer number raises implications for the entire plant. Of particular concern are those unexamined allegations which point to faulty installation of equipment (including fasteners problems and micro-organism problems in stainless, bronze and aluminum pipes), falsification of records, and worker harassment by management.

The Commission has narrowed the investigation to less than 20 percent of the allegations. The NRC report addresses only 71 of approximately 200 allegations defined by the Commission as being "safety-related." The remaining 130 allegations are not even being considered. Despite the fact that this limited review uncovered five safety problems, the NRC issued a license to STNP even after finding significant safety problems which are still uncorrected. Furthermore, the NRC approached many of the allegations by relying on inappropriately small samples for investigation. It is my understanding that the investigating team spent only four days at the plant, an insufficient time to thoroughly analyze the problems. In dealing with nuclear safety, nothing less than a

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5/23..To EDO to Prepare Response for Signature of
Chairman...Date due Comm: June 6..Cpys to: RF
OCA to Ack, Docket...88-0463

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complete investigation is reliable. Instead, what we are witnessing is a "rush job".

Another 240 allegations of intimidation, harassment and wrong-doing, which impact upon the quality assurance of the plant, are being deferred. The Office of Investigation has looked at only nine of those allegations to date. No attempt was made to expand the investigation beyond the particular allegations or to do additional work to increase the specificity of the allegations. The Commission depended entirely on the Government Accountability Project (GAP) for information and made no attempt to expand the investigation, as had been done at Comanche Peak in 1984.

I am requesting, therefore, that licensing for full power operation be delayed until all allegations regarding the safety of STNP are fully investigated and evaluated. It is the Commission's responsibility to assure safety. Given the outstanding allegations and the unresolved safety issues already identified by NRC staff, that responsibility is, as yet, unmet.

I urge you to conduct a thorough, independent investigation into all safety concerns. As long as doubt exists about nuclear-related safety, it is the Commission's responsibility to dispel that doubt by requiring corrections before full power operation is allowed.

Thank you for your attention. I look forward to your timely response.

Sincerely,


Edward J. Markey
Member of Congress

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