

MAR 19 1987

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The Honorable Michael Weddle  
New Hampshire House of Representatives  
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

Dear Mr. Weddle:

Your letter of February 17, 1987 to Chairman Zech, regarding the Seabrook plant has been referred to me for response. Your letter expressed reservations as to whether nuclear power plants, and in particular the Seabrook plant, could be entombed following an accident involving core melt. In a letter dated February 3, 1987 to the Office of Legislative Services, State of New Hampshire, I stated that should entombment be needed, we see no impediment to providing protection similar to that provided at Chernobyl. I would like to elaborate on that response.

The NRC does not require studies to be performed to determine if and how entombment should be done at each nuclear reactor following a core melt accident. Our evaluation of severe accident risk for U.S. reactors indicates that the likelihood of needing entombment is very remote. The U.S. reactors incorporate stringent design and operation requirements to prevent a severe meltdown accident and provide containments to help mitigate the consequences of such an accident in the unlikely event one was to occur. The study of the implications of the Chernobyl accident for U.S. reactors, which will be sent to you when it is available, supports the position that U.S. reactors are fundamentally different than the Chernobyl reactor and are not subject to the same accident. This position is supported by the experience at TMI-2 and the fact that the (TMI-2) accident, though severe, did not result in the need for entombment. We note, however, that the Soviets were able to devise a successful ad hoc plan for entombment subsequent to the accident. The design of an entombment scheme can best be done after the details of the accident are known, and we believe there is sufficient capability within the United States to successfully design and implement an entombment scheme in the unlikely event that such an action were necessary.

Your letter also asks whether there are sufficient protective radiation suits to sustain vital operations at nearby military facilities should a massive release of radioactivity occur. We are not aware of the specific provisions by the military to sustain vital operations in the unlikely event of a large

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The Honorable Michael Weddle

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radioactive release at Seabrook. However, in the event of any such release, the NRC, as well as other Federal Agencies, would provide appropriate support to the military to minimize the impact on vital military operations.

Sincerely,

Original Signed by

H. R. Denton

Harold R. Denton, Director  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

\*See previous sheet for concurrences

OFC	:TA:DSRO*	:DD:DSRO*	:D:DSRO*	:A/D:DPLA*	:DD:NRR	:D:NRR	:
NAME	:RSilver/bm	:BSheron	:TSpeis	:TNovak	:JSrizek	:HDenton	:
DATE	:3/ /87	:3/ /87	:3/ /87	:3/ /87	:3/ /87	:3/ /87	:

OFFICIAL RECORD COPY

The Honorable Michael Weddle  
State of New Hampshire, House of  
Representatives  
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

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Our evaluation of severe accident risk and the implications of the Chernobyl event for U.S. reactors indicate that the likelihood of needing entombment is very remote. The U.S reactors differ significantly from Chernobyl in that they incorporate stringent design and operation requirements to prevent a severe meltdown accident and provide stronger containments to help mitigate the consequences of such an accident in the unlikely event one was to occur. We also note that the Soviets were able to devise a successful ad hoc plan for entombment subsequent to the accident. The design of an entombment scheme can best be done after the details of the accident are known, and we would expect that there would be sufficient capability within the United States to successfully design and implement an entombment scheme in the unlikely event that such an action were necessary.

Your letter also expresses concern about continuation of vital operations at nearby military facilities should a massive release of radioactivity occur. Again, we would expect that the experts and resources needed to implement necessary actions could be rapidly organized to acceptably minimize disruption of vital operations.

Sincerely,

Harold R. Denton, Director  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

OFC	:TA:DSRO	:DD:DSRO	:D:DSRO	:A/D:DPLA	:DD:NRR	:D:NRR	:
NAME	:RSilver/bm	:BSheron	:TSpeis	:TNovak	:RVollmer	:HDenton	:
DATE	:3/10/87	:3/10/87	:3/10/87	:3/10/87	:3/ /87	:3/ /87	:



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

DPL-A

**ACTION**

EDO PRINCIPAL CORRESPONDENCE CONTROL  
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FROM:

DUE: 03/19/87

EDO CONTROL: 002590

DOC DT: 02/17/87

FINAL REPLY:

MICHAEL WEDDLE  
NEW HAMPSHIRE STATE REPRESENTATIVE

TO:

CHAIRMAN ZECH

FOR SIGNATURE OF:

\*\* GREEN \*\*

SECY NO:

DENTON

DESC:

ROUTING:

CONCERNS RE SEABROOK

MURLEY  
TAYLOR  
MURRAY  
KERR, SP  
BECKJORD

DATE: 03/05/87

ASSIGNED TO: NRR

CONTACT: DENTON

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS OR REMARKS:

REF. EDO 2436

NRR RECEIVED: 03/05/87  
ACTION: ~~DPLA - NOVAK~~  
NRR ROUTING: DENTON/VOLLMER  
PPAS  
MOSSBURG

*DSRO-Spud*