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July 31, 1986

Lando W. Zech, Jr., Chairman  
Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
Washington, D.C. 20555

Dear Mr. Zech:

Congratulations on your recent appointment as  
Chairman of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

I know we share a number of mutual concerns with  
respect to the safe operation of nuclear plants, disposal of  
high and low level waste and emergency planning.

As you may know, the Vermont Yankee nuclear power  
plant is a fourteen-year old, 520 MW boiling water reactor,  
located in Vernon, Vermont. Vermont Yankee has been shut  
down for the past nine months for the replacement of cracked  
circulation pipes and has just recently been put back in  
service.

With the increased concern regarding the  
application of nuclear technology and in light of the recent  
accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant, states must be  
assured that state-of-the-art safety measures are being used  
at nuclear power plants to insure the safety of all  
citizens.

In the start-up process for Vermont Yankee, serious  
questions were raised, including questions about its contain-  
ment. I met recently with officials from the Nuclear  
Regulatory Commission (NRC) and Vermont Yankee, calling for a  
safety review of the plant's containment. Vermont Yankee has  
agreed to my request for the safety study. I believe this  
safety review is a major step in dealing effectively with  
questions surrounding containment issues and can serve as the  
prototype for other nuclear plants that have Mark I  
containments.

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As you are probably aware, the NRC also agreed in late June to my request to initiate an overall risk assessment of Vermont Yankee and other nuclear power plants that are Vermont Yankee's age. This is the first time the NRC has agreed to conduct a comprehensive analysis of plants that are the age of Vermont Yankee.

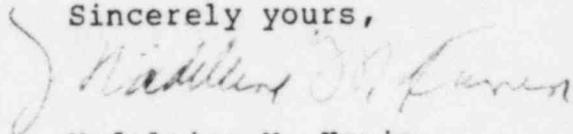
Also, as you may have been informed, I have not been satisfied with the NRC's recent attempt to limit Vermont State participation in certain Vermont Yankee plant inspections. I believe states must be brought into the NRC nuclear plant review and inspection process. For example, states should be able to participate in co-inspections and on-going evaluations with the NRC on nuclear plant safety, and to attend enforcement conferences on potential violations under certain guidelines. This is not currently spelled out in the existing federal legislation or in NRC regulations.

Additionally, I believe states should be allowed to adopt more stringent safety standards than those currently required by the NRC.

I would like to sit down with you to further discuss these issues. I believe a meeting would be most beneficial in furthering your understanding of the situation in Vermont and the benefits of increased participation by states in the overall safety monitoring process.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely yours,



Madeleine M. Kunin  
Governor

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