



UNITED STATES  
ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON 25, D.C.

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Dr. Herbert Kouts  
Chairman, Advisory Committee  
on Reactor Safeguards  
U. S. Atomic Energy Commission  
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Dr. Kouts:

Transmitted herewith for the use of the Committee are  
copies of the following:

1. Eighteen (18) copies of letter dated June 24, 1964, from  
Mr. David E. Pesonen.
2. Eighteen (18) copies of "Meteorological Aspects of Nuclear  
Reactor Hazards at Bodega Bay" by Dr. J. E. McDonald.
3. Three (3) copies of letter to Mr. Pesonen from R. L. Doan,  
Director, Division of Reactor Licensing, dated July 24, 1964.

Sincerely yours,

Edson G. Case  
Assistant Director  
for Facilities Licensing  
Division of Licensing  
and Regulation

Enclosures:  
As stated above

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| OFFICE ▶  | SEB: DRL           | SEB: DRL     | DRL        |  |  |  |
| SURNAME ▶ | R. Waterfield: bwc | J. F. Newell | E. G. Case |  |  |  |
| DATE ▶    | 7/22/64            | 7/ / 64      | 7/24/64    |  |  |  |

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# New Safety Data Asked by AEC on Bodega A-Plant

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The Atomic Energy Commission has asked the Pacific Gas & Electric Company to spell out in detail how it proposed to protect its Bodega Head atom power plant against severe earth fault movements and big tidal waves.

The new questions are so far-reaching as to require weeks or months of intensive engineering study to answer them.

The long promised hearing at Santa Rosa on the PG&E's nuclear reactor license application cannot now take place before late fall. It may be winter before it is scheduled.

THE NEW questions are contained in a letter from Harold L. Price, director of regulation for AEC, to C. C. Wheelchel, a vice-president of the big utility. It follows a discussion of the Bodega Head Project by the AEC's Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards at Chicago on May 8.

The committee questioned PG&E closely about its plan to protect the proposed Bodega plant against earth movement by setting the reactor and its containment vessel on a bed of sand and surrounding the whole thing with "a layer of compressible material, of a type yet to be selected."

THIS, the PG&E said on March 31, would fully protect the atom plant against earth shifts of two inches. If the rock ripped and moved as much as a foot, the company said, the reactor and its container could be brought to a safe shutdown without damage.

If the movement were two feet, the steel container might be crushed but the inner reactor would remain intact.

In his letter to Wheelchel, Price said bluntly:

"IT IS NOT clear to us how your design plan would achieve this objective."

Price underscored the new standard of credibility: "A primary question concerns the ability of the plant, located approximately a thousand feet west of the edge of the San Andreas fault zone, to withstand as much as a few feet of displacement without undue



By  
**GEORGE  
DUSHECK**

hazard to the health and safety of the public."

AMONG THE many specific technical problems put to PG&E by Price were these:

If the fault sheared three feet, would the company's design result in a containment building with unimpaired leak tightness?

Would the safety "scram" system for shutting down the reactor work under these circumstances?

Would the nuclear pile itself remain intact?

Would the power supply to the reactor and generator plant (needed to carry out safety and shutdown measures) remain intact?

IF ALL VITAL connections to the reactor building were severed, would reactor remain safely shut down?

The Price letter also raised a question never before posed to the PG&E except by its conservationist foes, the Northern California Association to Preserve Bodega Head:

"What measures would be taken to protect against tsunamis (tidal waves) greater in size than the breakwater at Bodega Head would suppress?"

A COMPANY spokesman admitted the answers will require a major engineering study effort, taking a minimum of six to eight weeks. Then the Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards will discuss the matter again.

If the company answers do not satisfy it, the delay in coming to a decision could be extended indefinitely. The PG&E is being asked to design for an accident it considers incredible. No other American utility which has gone into the nuclear power field has been given this burden.