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COMMITTEES:
BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS
COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION
FINANCE
BUDGET

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 1, 1987

Mr. Carlton Kammerer
Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Director, Congressional Affairs
1717 H Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20505

Dear Mr. Kammerer,

Ms. Helen Stainbrook informed me of her concerns regarding the Consumers Power Company's nuclear power plant near Charlevoix. For your information I have enclosed a copy of her letter. Please inform me what actions the NRC has initiated with Consumers Power Company regarding the plant's shielding requirements, and the Company's response.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Don Riegle

Donald W. Riegle, Jr.

DWR/cw
encl:

309 East Front Street
Traverse City, Michigan 49684
tel. 616-946-1300

These allegations concern me very much. Is it true that;

1. Big Rock Nuclear Plant has taken only a "Philosophical position" to reactor shielding?

2. That Big Rock has a high core damage probabitity?

3. That the facility is only allowed to operate because we are a "low population area? Does this mean that the lives of my children and myself are worth less than the lives of people in Detroit or Chicago?

Please check into this and let me know what you find out.

Thank You.

Helen Stainbrook

Helen Stainbrook
214 Bridge Street
Charlevoix, Michigan
49720

# CONSUMERS POWER COMPANY'S BIG ROCK

## OLD

I - Big Rock was constructed in 1960 and began operation in 1962.

## DANGEROUS

II - Big Rock has been named the most dangerous nuclear plant in the U.S. by the Institute of Policy Studies. Three top level G.E. engineers (Bridenbaugh, Minor and Hubbard) called for an immediate shutdown of Big Rock.

Big Rock has a high core damage probability (meltdown) of $9.8 \times 10^{-4}$ per year. It also has a high degree of core damage events which produce very large releases of radiation. Consumers Power admits that "the probability at which one or more fatalities would occur for Big Rock is approximately a factor of six higher than for the average plant analyzed in the Reactor Safety Study." See "Big Rock P.R.A." (Probabalistic Risk Assessment) pages 117-138.

## NO SHIELDING

III - Under pressure from the NRC to improve shielding Consumers' officials replied "Based on these results (The Big Rock Probabilistic Risk Assessment) a philosophical position has been developed relative to the reactor shielding at Big Rock Point." According to Consumers Power Company in the event of an accident, movement around the site would be prohibited for up to 21 hours because of gamma radiation. Workers would not get close to many vital plant areas. See C.P.Co. Correspondence 3-14-80.

## EXPERIMENTAL

IV - In 1977 Consumers signed a $15,000,000 eight-year contract with Energy Research & Development Administration for experiments at Big Rock on nuclear fuel performance. Big Rock has conducted research in high power density, heat transfer effectiveness, mixed oxide fuels, new types of cladding, center melt research, high burnup of fuels, etc.

## RADIATION

V - Big Rock is designed to vent radiation continuously. Today's nuclear plants are fined thousands of dollars if vents are inadvertently left open. Big Rock must vent, however, so that operators can have access to vital areas of the plant. This is obviously a problem when accidents occur (vents must be closed).

## LIQUID WASTE

VI - When liquid radioactive waste batches are too radioactive, water is pumped out of Lake Michigan and used to dilute batches. They are then released to Lake Michigan. Fish have been found showing increased levels of radioactivity. Tritium cannot be filtered from waste.