

AUG 21 1987

The Honorable Carl Levin  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Levin:

Your letter of July 9, 1987 requested that NRC look into the concerns expressed by Ms. Kolet in her letter to you relative to the safety of commercial nuclear power plants in the United States and emergency planning. This letter responds to your request.

It is a fundamental task of the NRC to ensure that existing reactors and those coming on line operate safely. The NRC's highest priority is to ensure the protection of the public health and safety. This is accomplished by vigilant oversight of the design, construction, and operation of nuclear power plants. NRC regulations require that the industry take extensive measures to prevent and mitigate potential accidents.

With respect to Ms. Kolet's question on emergency procedures in the event of a serious accident at the Fermi-2 nuclear power plant, the emergency plan at Fermi-2, has been developed by Detroit Edison Company (DECo) and reviewed by NRC, Federal Emergency Management Agency, State and local authorities. Under this plan DECo would be responsible for: (1) classifying the emergency with respect to the potential risk to the public health and safety; (2) notifying offsite authorities; and (3) recommending any public protective actions, such as sheltering or evacuation. State and local authorities would: (1) determine the proper protective actions; (2) alert and notify the general public within 15 minutes of a decision to recommend protective actions; and (3) assist the general public in carrying out the protective actions. These emergency plans are tested every year by DECo and every two years by the State and local authorities.

You mentioned the Chernobyl incident and questioned if it was really worth having nuclear power plants if so many people could perish in an emergency situation. With regard to Chernobyl, I am enclosing our publication, "Report on the Accident at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Station" to assist you in understanding that accident. As detailed in Chapter 8 of this report the deaths which ensued from this very severe accident were restricted to personnel who were on site during the course of the incident.

I hope that this response will be helpful to you in addressing Ms. Kolet's concerns. Please let me know if the NRC can be of further assistance to you.

Sincerely,

Original signed by  
Victor Stello

Victor Stello, Jr.  
Executive Director  
for Operations

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H PDR

RD-25  
NU SAFETY

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8/17/87

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With respect to Ms. Kolet's question on emergency procedures in the event of a serious accident at the Fermi-2 nuclear power plant, I should first point out that the circumstances surrounding the accident at Chernobyl in the Soviet Union are far different from those at nuclear power plants in the United States. The design of the Chernobyl nuclear reactor is substantially different from that of U.S. reactors; the administrative procedures used to control testing at Chernobyl were different from those required at U.S. plants; the regulatory oversight of U.S. plants by the NRC is different; and most important, U.S. reactors have a strong containment structure surrounding the reactor to prevent the immediate widespread release of radioactive material to the environment, as happened at Chernobyl. Finally, to add an additional layer of protection at U.S. plants, the NRC regulations require an emergency protection plan for the area within a radius of about 10 miles from each plant. We require that there be comprehensive plans in place, that trained personnel and facilities be available, and that the plans be demonstrated to be workable in regular exercises. Although it is highly unlikely that emergency actions would ever be required beyond 10 miles from the plant, as in the case of Ms. Kolet, we are confident that the same basic plans and procedures could be used to take emergency protective actions beyond 10 miles if that were thought necessary. We therefore believe that the possibility that "many people perish in an emergency situation", as Ms. Kolet states, is very unlikely.

The emergency plan at Fermi-2, has been developed by Detroit Edison Company (DECo) and reviewed by NRC, Federal Emergency Management Agency, State and local authorities. Under this plan DECo would be responsible for: (1) classifying the emergency with respect to the potential risk to the public health and safety; (2) notifying offsite authorities; and (3) recommending any public protective actions, such as sheltering or evacuation. State and local



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for Operations

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With respect to Ms. Kolet's question on standard emergency procedures, the NRC regulations require a two-part protective action plan with one part addressing the zone within a radius of about 10 miles from the plant and one for the zone within a radius of about 50 miles. The emergency plan at Fermi-2, has been developed by Detroit Edison Company (DECo) and reviewed by NRC, FEMA, State and local authorities. Under this plan DECo would be responsible for: (1) classifying the emergency with respect to the potential risk to the public health and safety; (2) notifying offsite authorities; and (3) recommending any public protective actions, such as sheltering or evacuation. State and local authorities would: (1) determine the proper protective actions; (2) alert and notify the general public within 15 minutes of a decision to recommend protective actions; and (3) assist the general public in carrying out the protective actions. These emergency plans are tested every year by DECo and every two years by the State and local authorities.

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Senator Levin

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

**ACTION**

EDO PRINCIPAL CORRESPONDENCE CONTROL  
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FROM: SEN. CARL LEVIN  
TO: CA  
FOR SIGNATURE OF: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
DATE: 08/04/87  
\*\* GREEN \*\*  
EDC CONTROL: 003032  
DOC NO: 07/09/87  
FINAL REPLY:  
SECY NO: 87-0853  
DESC: ENCL LETTER FROM TRACY KOLET CONCERNING SAFETY OF  
NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS, SPECIFICALLY FERMI II  
ROUTING: DAVIS, RIII  
DATE: 07/20/87  
ASSIGNED TO: NRR CONTACT: MURLEY

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS OR REMARKS:

NRR RECEIVED: JULY 21, 1987  
DRSP: CRUTCHFIELD

NRR ROUTING: MURLEY/SNIEZEK  
STAROSTECKI  
MIRAGLIA  
FUNCHES  
BLAHA  
MOSSBURG

*Virgilio/Stepano*

*Due 7/31*



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CORRESPONDENCE CONTROL TICKET

PAPER NUMBER: CRC-87-0853                      LOGGING DATE: Jul 16 87  
ACTION OFFICE: OPA  
AUTHOR: C. Levin--Const Ref  
AFFILIATION: U.S. SENATE  
LETTER DATE: Jul 9 87              FILE CODE: I&P-2 BP  
SUBJECT: Express concern about nuclear power plants  
ACTION: Direct Reply  
DISTRIBUTION: OCA to Ack  
SPECIAL HANDLING: None  
NOTES: TraceyKolet  
DATE DUE: Jul 30 87  
SIGNATURE: .                      DATE SIGNED:  
AFFILIATION:

Rec'd Off. EDO

Date 7-20-87  
Time 2:15p

EDO --- 003032