

July 31, 2000

Mr. Walter C. Swain, Hydrologist/Science Liaison  
U.S. Geological Survey  
Placer Hall, 6000 J Street  
Sacramento, CA 95819-6129

SUBJECT: REPLY TO JUNE 26, 2000, E-MAIL LETTER TO THE NRC'S PUBLIC  
DOCUMENT ROOM

Dear Mr. Swain:

Thank you for your e-mail dated June 26, 2000, to Ms. Teresa Linton of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission's (NRC) Public Document Room, which forwarded an e-mail from Mr. Aladdin M. Masry. In his e-mail, Mr. Masry stated that "...the San Christianitos Fault has moved and ruptures the ground. The fault runs in juxtaposition to San Onofre [sic] nuclear power plant and its movement endangers the plant structural integrity...."

In your e-mail, you stated that you have no additional information and you have forwarded Mr. Masry's message to the Office of the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Western Regional Geologist in Menlo Park for their information and decision on any USGS follow up that may be indicated. In the meantime, NRC staff have reviewed Mr. Masry's letter and are unable to substantiate his assertion because he did not provide any specific details or reference to any scientific research publications regarding the Christianitos fault. Accordingly, we plan to take no further immediate action on this matter pending your Western Regional review.

During initial plant licensing, USGS and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration geologists and seismologists, acting as advisors to the NRC, reviewed the site. Also, the site was reviewed by the NRC's Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards. SONGS was licensed consistent with the seismic and geologic siting criteria for nuclear power plants set forth in Title 10 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (10 CFR), Part 100, Appendix A. The site has undergone geologic, geophysical, geotechnical, and seismic investigations and reviews. The seismic and geologic siting criteria in the regulations and the NRC's Standard Review Plan require that a nuclear power plant site be evaluated for earthquake ground motion and surface faulting. This was done for the SONGS site prior to the plant being licensed. The Christianitos fault was thoroughly investigated prior to the licensing of SONGS Units 2 and 3. The fault was determined to not be a *capable fault*, as defined in 10 CFR, Part 100, Appendix A, (i.e., it has not had any movement at or near the ground surface in the past 35,000 years or movement of a recurring nature within the past 500,000 years nor macro-seismicity with a direct relationship to the fault.) The seismic design basis of SONGS provides reasonable assurance that the units can withstand the seismic hazard at the site.

W.C. Swain

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Please keep us informed of the results of your Western Regional review. We request that you forward their decision to the NRC for our consideration. Should you have any questions or comments regarding these matters, please call me toll-free at 1-800-368-5642.

Sincerely,

***/RA by Stuart A. Richards for/***

Stephen Dembek, Chief, Section 2  
Project Directorate IV & Decommissioning  
Division of Licensing Project Management  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

cc: Mr. Harold B. Ray  
Executive Vice President  
Southern California Edison Company  
San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station  
P. O. Box 128  
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San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station, Units 2 and 3

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Mr. Robert A. Laurie, Commissioner  
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Sacramento, CA 95814

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