

August 12, 2011

The Honorable James M. Inhofe
Ranking Member, Committee on
Environment and Public Works
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Inhofe:

I am responding to your letter of July 8, 2011, urging us to undertake a near-term comparison of U.S. and Japanese regulatory requirements.

The Commission established a Near-Term Task Force to conduct a methodical and systematic review of our processes and regulations in light of events at Fukushima and determine whether the agency should make additional improvements to our regulatory framework. Although the Commission has separately directed the staff to compare U.S. and Japanese requirements in the specific area of station blackout, the Commission did not direct, and the Task Force did not perform, a comprehensive review of the Japanese regulatory framework and comparison to the U. S. system. Such a comprehensive review of Japanese regulations and NRC regulations was not necessary for the Near-Term Task Force to recommend selective safety enhancements in the context of our own regulatory framework. The Task Force focused on evaluating our domestic capabilities to withstand events like those that occurred in Japan. It did this by looking at the critical elements of those events and associated U.S. program requirements and their implementation. The Task Force made its recommendations based on its expertise and knowledge of the NRC's regulatory framework.

The Task Force recently submitted its report to the Commission for consideration. It includes a comprehensive set of 12 recommendations intended to increase safety and redefine what level of protection of public health is regarded as adequate, including clarifying our regulatory framework. The Commission is currently deliberating the path forward from the Task Force recommendations, including areas that may warrant further review.

Thank you for your ongoing interest in the Commission. I am confident that our approach appropriately focuses on events in Japan and uses those facts and associated insights to develop recommendations for the U.S. As always, I would welcome the opportunity to meet and discuss issues with you at any time. Please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Gregory B. Jaczko

Identical letter sent to:

The Honorable James M. Inhofe
Ranking Member, Committee on
Environment and Public Works
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Barbara Boxer
Chairman, Committee on Environment
and Public Works
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510