

January 2, 2013

The Honorable Raul M. Grijalva  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Grijalva:

On behalf of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), I am responding to your letter of November 13, 2012. You requested that the San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station (SONGS) remain offline until public safety can be assured and sought assurance that public safety will remain our top priority for all commercial nuclear power plants.

The NRC has been conducting independent inspections and review of steam generator degradation at SONGS, and is currently assessing Southern California Edison's (SCE's) response to the NRC's March 27, 2012, Confirmatory Action Letter and SCE's proposed restart plan. We also recently established a SONGS Special Project organization within the NRC Region IV office and a dedicated SONGS Special Projects Branch at NRC Headquarters within the Division of Operating Reactor Licensing to ensure focused oversight and coordination of agency resources.

On November 30, 2012, in a public forum, the NRC met with SCE to discuss the company's response to the NRC's Confirmatory Action Letter. At that meeting, SCE discussed the basis, methodology, and conclusions of its evaluation of the steam generator tube degradation at SONGS and the readiness for Unit 2 to restart. The NRC's inspection and review activities are continuing, and we are identifying additional information that SCE will need to provide before we can complete our evaluation. I reaffirm to you the Commission's stated commitment that the agency will not allow a restart at SONGS until the review is completed and the NRC has reasonable assurance that operation of the facility will provide adequate protection of public health and safety.

Regarding the issue of design changes, on June 18, 2012, the Commission received a petition requesting a hearing on the issue of whether a license amendment was required for the replacement of the SONGS steam generators. On November 8, 2012, the Commission issued an order referring one portion of the petition to the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board Panel for consideration, and referring another portion of the petition to the NRC Executive Director for Operations for consideration under regulations pertaining to petitions for enforcement-related actions, 10 CFR 2.206. This specific section of the Code of Federal Regulations provides stakeholders with a forum to advance their concerns and to obtain full or partial relief, or written reasons why the request is not being granted. Actions taken throughout this process are publicly available. Any decision on either of the above-mentioned referrals is reviewable by the Commission. Therefore, it would be inappropriate for the Commission to comment on this petition at this time.

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The agency's longstanding commitment to our mission to ensure adequate protection of public health and safety, to promote the common defense and security, and to protect the environment remains unchanged. We continue to maintain a clear focus on our safety and security responsibilities. We are also committed to communicating transparently with local communities and elected officials and listening to their concerns.

Thank you for your interest in this matter. If you need any additional information, please contact me or Ms. Rebecca Schmidt, Director of the Office of Congressional Affairs, at (301) 415-1776.

Sincerely,

*/RA/*

Allison M. Macfarlane

Identical letter sent to:

The Honorable Raul M. Grijalva  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Representative Luis V. Gutiérrez  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Representative Dennis J. Kucinich  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515