

April 9, 2001

Jonathan M. Block, Esq.
94 Main Street
Putney, VT 05346-0566

Dear Mr. Block:

Thank you for your participation at this year's Regulatory Information Conference (RIC) and your generous remarks in your letter of March 16, 2001, about the performance of my staff at the RIC. It continues to be an effective forum for the industry, the regulatory agency and the public to exchange ideas and matters of interest to all parties involved with nuclear power safety.

The suggestion you reference regarding resident inspector involvement in actively initiating public meetings has been considered as part of our lessons learned effort following the Indian Point Unit No. 2 steam generator tube failure event which occurred in February 2000. My staff has reviewed the issue of increased interaction between the resident inspector and the public and local officials and concluded that some program enhancements can be made. The enclosed memorandum describes the program enhancements we are contemplating in this area. However, the resident inspector may not be the most appropriate NRC person to be actively initiating public meetings as was suggested at the RIC. The resident inspector's skills are best utilized in assessing licensee performance and inspecting plant safety.

Assuring public confidence in both the NRC and nuclear plant safety is of primary interest to the agency and we believe the resident inspector can add value as a participant to activities that support this objective. The degree to which a resident inspector participates in such activities relative to their role in assuring public health and safety is a judgment that will continue to be made by regional management on a plant-by-plant basis dependant upon inspection workload and public interest at the specific plant site. I hope the enclosed information provides you with a good sense of the agency's approach in assuring an appropriate balance is achieved.

Thank you for your inquiry and I hope to see you again at next year's RIC.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Samuel J. Collins, Director
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Enclosure: As stated

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