

November 7, 2001

The Honorable Ron Paul
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Paul:

I am responding to your request forwarded by your staff member, Ms. Dianna Gilbert, in her letter dated October 15, 2001. You requested that the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) help address the concerns of your constituent Mr. Carl Milentz regarding security measures at the South Texas Nuclear Operating Company plants. Mr. Milentz asked that security at the South Texas Project, Units 1 and 2, be increased or the plants be shut down. Although Mr. Milentz did not so state, his concerns about security at the South Texas Project plants appear to arise from the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.

I assure you that the NRC has actively monitored the situation since the day of the terrorist attacks and is prepared to take appropriate measures to ensure continued safe operation of the two South Texas Project units. Immediately after the attacks, the NRC issued a threat advisory to the NRC licensees that they implement the highest level of security. The specific actions are sensitive information, and, therefore, cannot be publicly discussed, but they generally include increased patrols, heightened coordination with law enforcement and military authorities, and additional restrictions on access of personnel and vehicles to the licensed facility sites. The NRC does not believe that the current terrorist threat justifies shutting down the South Texas Project units. Since the attacks, the NRC has maintained close liaisons with other Federal agencies, including intelligence agencies and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). As an example of the actions resulting from this coordination, on November 2, 2001, the FAA issued a NOTAM that established temporary no-fly zones over nuclear power plants. General aviation flights were prohibited from flying within 10 nautical miles radius of and below 18,000 feet (mean sea level) over these sites. This restriction has been rigorously enforced since its issuance.

However, the NRC is continuing to assess any threat to a nuclear power plant and to ensure sufficient protection. The NRC has issued threat advisories and a comprehensive list of safety and security measures to strengthen licensees' capabilities to respond to a terrorist's attack.

As a result of the terrorist attacks and the possibility of future terrorist attacks, the NRC is undertaking a top-to-bottom reevaluation of its safeguards and security programs for civilian nuclear facilities. The reevaluation will examine the basic assumptions of these programs and will involve the participation of other national security organizations. In making any changes to existing programs, the NRC will consider pertinent information from all Federal agencies.

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I trust that this response meets your needs for information to address Mr. Milentz's concerns. If you have any questions regarding this response, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

/RA/

William D. Travers
Executive Director
for Operations

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Executive Director
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