

March 18, 2002

Ms. Dorothy Mehler
1706 Compass Drive
Forked River, NJ 08731

Dear Ms. Mehler:

I am responding to acknowledge receipt of your letter and that of the State of New Jersey specifically addressing the topic of emergency planning. I understand that the project manager for Oyster Creek, Mr. Peter Tam, had spoken with you on February 12, 2002, regarding your concerns. Mr. Tam informed you that even though the State of New Jersey forwarded your letter on October 19, 2001, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) did not receive it until January 15, 2002. The NRC's mail was detained due to increased precaution handling mail sent to the Federal Government. I sincerely apologize for the lateness of our reply.

In your letter, you stated your concern about emergency access provisions for your community and the residents of Forked River Beach, New Jersey. In particular, you expressed concern about evacuation over two small bridges to reach Route 9 under emergency conditions involving Oyster Creek Nuclear Generating Station (Oyster Creek).

The NRC and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) are the two Federal agencies responsible for evaluating emergency preparedness at and around nuclear power plants. The NRC is responsible for assessing the adequacy of onsite emergency plans developed by the licensee, whereas your concern involves offsite emergency planning which is under the jurisdiction of FEMA. Therefore, we have forwarded your letter to FEMA for its review (copy of letter enclosed). Mr. Tam will forward FEMA's response to you when it is received at NRC. I would note that in a letter dated January 29, 2001, FEMA reaffirmed that the offsite radiological emergency response plans for the State of New Jersey and the affected local jurisdictions specific to Oyster Creek provide reasonable assurance that appropriate measures can be taken offsite to protect the health and safety of the public in the event of a radiological emergency. FEMA based this conclusion on the results of an October 5, 1999, exercise. We have also enclosed a copy of this letter for your information.

The attachments of your letter show that you were concerned about the safety of Oyster Creek in light of the September 11, 2001, catastrophe. In the wake of the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, the NRC has been working to ensure adequate protection of the nation's nuclear power plants. This work has involved close coordination with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), other intelligence and law enforcement agencies, the military, State and local authorities, as well as the plant licensees and operators. Although there have been no credible threats to any commercial nuclear facility in the United States, shortly after the attacks on September 11, the NRC advised plant operators to implement the highest level of security, which they promptly did. The specific actions are understandably sensitive and, therefore, cannot be discussed in a public document. These actions generally include increased patrols, augmented security forces and capabilities, additional security posts, heightened coordination with law enforcement and military authorities, and more limited personnel and vehicular access to the sites.

The NRC has actively monitored the situation since the day of the terrorist attacks, and continues to ensure that licensees maintain the appropriate security level. Nuclear facility sites are still being maintained in a heightened state of security readiness. In addition, the NRC has begun a top-to-bottom reevaluation of nuclear power plant security. This evaluation is part of a broader review by the Federal Government. As stated above, this review is a coordinated effort of national and local security organizations. The NRC is consulting with the FBI, other intelligence and law enforcement agencies, and the military to ensure that its reevaluation considers information from all relevant agencies. We will continue to actively monitor the situation and will take appropriate measures to ensure the continued safety of Oyster Creek and other nuclear facilities. One such measure we took was an order issued to all licensees on February 25, 2002, to formalize the heightened security measures and to require certain additional enhancements.

I appreciate the opportunity to respond to your concerns, and I hope that you find this information useful. If you would like to discuss this or other issues regarding Oyster Creek, please call Mr. Peter Tam, at (301) 415-1451.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Samuel J. Collins, Director
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Enclosures: As stated

cc w/encl: Senator Leonard T. Connors, Jr.
Assemblyman Jeffrey W. Moran
Assemblyman Christopher J. Connors

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*See previous concurrence

**concurred on 2/7/02, concurred again 3/1/02 on revisions.