

February 26, 2002

Ms. Joyce C. Kaskow
403 6th Avenue
Seaside Heights, NJ 08751-1321

Dear Ms. Kaskow:

The purpose of this letter is to acknowledge receipt of a copy of your October 1, 2001, letter to Assemblyman Christopher J. Connors, to "look into the security practices at the Oyster Creek Power Plant in Lacey." His office forwarded the letter to the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) on October 17, 2001, but the NRC only received your letter days ago because its mail was detained for sterilization against possible anthrax contamination. I sincerely apologize for the lateness of our reply. I understand that the NRC project manager, Mr. Peter Tam, spoke with you by telephone on February 13, 2002.

All nuclear power plants are required by NRC regulations to have approved physical security plans. Accordingly, the NRC staff reviewed and approved Oyster Creek's physical security plan (see enclosed page from Safety Evaluation Report, NUREG-1382, related to the full-term operating license for Oyster Creek Nuclear Generating Station, dated January 1991). The NRC staff periodically inspects the licensee's security program for compliance with pertinent regulatory requirements.

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 involves close coordination with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), other intelligence and law enforcement agencies, the Federal Aviation Administration, the United States military, and State and local authorities, as well as with the plant licensees and operators. Although there have been no credible threats to any commercial nuclear facility in the United States, the NRC prudently advised plant operators to implement the highest level of security, which they promptly did. The specific actions taken are obviously sensitive and, therefore, cannot be discussed in a public document, but they generally include increased patrols, augmented security forces and capabilities, additional security posts, heightened coordination with law enforcement and military authorities, and more limited access of personnel and vehicles 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.

Nuclear power plants are inherently robust, and their design is based on defense-in-depth principles. They have many features to protect the public health and safety. For example, they have reinforced containment buildings and redundant safety systems to help prevent or limit the

release of radioactive material to the environment in the unlikely event of a terrorist attack. In light of the facility's defense-in-depth, the heightened security measures implemented in response to the September 11, 2001, attacks, and the NRC's ongoing reevaluation of its security and safeguards regulations and programs, we believe that appropriate measures are being taken to ensure the public health and safety. However, 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

Enclosure: As stated

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

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*See previous concurrence