

August 20, 2003

The Honorable Frank A. LoBiondo  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman LoBiondo:

I am responding on behalf of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) to your July 11, 2003, letter regarding the concerns raised by one of your constituents about dry cask storage of spent fuel at the Hope Creek and Salem Nuclear Plants on Artificial Island in Salem County, New Jersey. Your constituent was particularly concerned that a meeting to discuss Public Service Electric and Gas' (PSEG) potential plans for dry cask storage was conducted in the Region I office in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania, rather than at a location closer to the site.

The meeting held between PSEG management and NRC on June 19, 2003, was a meeting requested by PSEG to inform NRC of their preliminary plans to construct and operate an Independent Spent Fuel Storage Installation (ISFSI) at Artificial Island using the general licensing provisions of 10 CFR Part 72. Normally, a meeting of this preliminary nature would be facilitated by our Spent Fuel Project Office (SFPO) and held in our Rockville, Maryland, office. However, staff from SFPO and Region I decided to hold this meeting in our Regional office to facilitate attendance by interested local citizens. Furthermore, a toll-free telephone number was established and made available to anyone who could not attend the meeting in person. Notice of this meeting was posted on the NRC public Web site two weeks before the meeting. Two members of the public attended the meeting in King of Prussia and a media outlet from "South Jersey" listened in on the toll-free line. A summary of the meeting and a list of attendees is enclosed and is also available to the public on our Agency Documents Access and Management Control Systems (ADAMS) (accession number ML031530197).

At the June 19 meeting, the NRC encouraged PSEG to hold frequent local informational meetings on this subject. PSEG indicated they would do so. Meetings conducted by NRC will continue to be open for public observation and efforts will be made to facilitate attendance for all interested parties in accordance with our public meeting policy.

We believe that reactor licensees can safely store spent fuel in either spent fuel pools or in dry storage casks at their sites until it can be shipped to a centralized interim spent fuel storage facility or a permanent disposal facility. NRC requires that spent fuel storage systems of any type be designed with a defense-in-depth philosophy to withstand severe natural phenomena, including earthquakes and tornadoes. These robust designs provide reasonable assurance to NRC that spent fuel storage facilities can be operated safely and that the public health and safety will be adequately protected. NRC will inspect the design, construction, and operation of any ISFSI at Artificial Island, and issue written reports on any findings.

The Honorable Frank A. LoBiondo

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I trust this is responsive to your request. Please feel free to contact me if you have additional questions regarding this matter.

Sincerely,

**/RA/William Travers**

William D. Travers  
Executive Director  
for Operations

Enclosure: As stated

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