

February 23, 2006

Ms. Billie Pirner Garde  
Clifford & Garde Law Office  
1707 L Street, N.W, Suite 500  
Washington, D.C. 20036

Dear Ms. Garde:

On behalf of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), I am responding to your letter of January 17, 2006, in which you express "concern about the position that the nuclear industry continues to take in opposition to the NRC staff's attempts to improve NRC oversight of licensee safety culture." The Commission appreciated the opportunity to hear your views on this important matter in your individual meetings with us during the week of February 13, 2006.

The staff has informed the Commission that they have considered comments provided in your letter as well as those received during subsequent public meetings, along with the input of other stakeholders, in developing an approach to provide the NRC earlier opportunities to identify safety culture weaknesses before they manifest themselves in significant safety concerns. The staff believes it has developed, with stakeholders and industry, an approach that should enhance the Reactor Oversight Process (ROP) to address safety culture more fully. The staff plans to update the Commission on March 2, 2006, on their progress toward enhancing the ROP in this area and will provide an Information Paper in May 2006 describing the revised process.

I appreciate your contribution to the safety culture initiative to date and hope that you will continue to provide your views and expertise to this effort.

Sincerely,

**/RA/**

Peter B. Lyons  
Acting Chairman