

D. Vito

From: "Dave Lochbaum" <dlochbaum@ucsusa.org>
To: <djv@nrc.gov>
Date: 12/16/03 2:24PM
Subject: New Jersey

Hello Dave:

About two weeks ago, I was interviewed by the NRC Office of the Inspector General for an audit they recently initiated to examine the Office of Investigations. During that interview, I was generally not enthusiastic about the performance of OI - but I did point to what I'm hearing about the ongoing inquiry at Salem as potential evidence that things may be changing. I told OIG that I'd be monitoring the Salem matter to determine if our view on OI needs revision. From everything I've heard about the Salem matter, the NRC's process - with the possible exception of its pace - has been really good. I truly hope that's the case. This reasonable expectation that the NRC was proceeding so well on this matter provided me, and others, the patience we wouldn't otherwise have had to wait for NRC.

UCS is monitoring this matter for the bigger picture as well. Safety culture is a cross-cutting issue that has adversely affected several nuclear plant sites. It is our hope that Region I's handling of the Salem matter can be used for positive lessons learned to better complement the negative lessons learned from prior cases. They over-populated the "what not to do" bin. Better definition of "what to do" which might result from Region I in this Salem case could be a very big step towards resolving the safety culture problem.

Thanks,

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