

August 18, 2011

The Honorable Chris Van Hollen
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Van Hollen:

On behalf of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), I am responding to a July 22, 2011, email from Benjamin Cook of your staff. Mr. Cook forwarded correspondence from your constituent, Eric Goodall, who expressed concern regarding the safety of the Calvert Cliffs Nuclear Power Plants (CCNPP), Units 1 and 2 and proposed Unit 3, should there be an accident or terrorist event at the liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminal in Cove Point, Maryland.

NRC regulations require that nuclear power plant structures, systems, and components important to safety be appropriately protected against dynamic effects resulting from equipment failures that may occur within the nuclear power plant as well as events and conditions that may occur outside the nuclear power plant. These latter events include the effects of an explosion of hazardous materials that may be associated with nearby industrial activities, such as storage facilities or transportation routes, including navigable waterways and pipelines.

CCNPP is located 3.6 miles north of the Dominion Cove Point LNG facility. The principle risk to the safe operation of CCNPP is the overpressure effects on plant structure, systems and components in the event of an accident at Cove Point. The CCNPP site hazards analysis includes an assessment of the risks associated with this facility. The hazards analysis was initially evaluated in 1978, at which time the NRC staff concluded that the likelihood of an LNG accident in the vicinity of CCNPP causing a significant radioactivity release was acceptably low and there was reasonable assurance that the health and safety of the public would not be endangered by the effects of an LNG accident on CCNPP.

An updated hazard analysis was submitted by the CCNPP licensee in 1993 after the Cove Point facility restarted operations following a period of closure. At that time, the NRC staff concluded that the safe operation of CCNPP and its independent spent fuel storage installation would not be jeopardized by the operation of the LNG facility. In 2003, when the LNG facility proposed some modifications involving expansion of its storage capacities and LNG shipments, the NRC reviewed the proposed expansion and concluded that the proposed modifications did not invalidate the previous findings regarding the LNG hazards to the CCNPP.

Most recently, in 2008, the LNG facility proposed additional expansion with two new storage tanks and increased LNG imports. This expansion was completed in 2009. The licensee submitted a revised LNG hazards analysis, in the form of a study performed by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources Power Plant Research Program (PRP), to address the expansion at the time it was proposed. In addition to reviewing this study, the NRC requested the applicant for proposed CCNPP Unit 3 to provide a quantitative estimate and supporting analyses regarding the overpressure hazards to CCNPP Unit 3 due to the Cove Point facility. The NRC also conducted an independent confirmatory calculation to estimate the impact of the expanded Cove Point facility on physical structures at CCNPP. After a review and analysis of

this information, the NRC staff concluded that the planned expansion of the Cove Point facility did not represent an undue hazard to the safety of the CCNPP.

I hope this adequately responds to your constituent's inquiry. Please be assured the NRC has worked diligently to ensure that the operation of CCNPP provides adequate protection of public health and safety and common defense and security. If you have any questions, please contact me or Ms. Rebecca Schmidt, Director of the Office of Congressional Affairs, at (301) 415-1776.

Sincerely,

/RA/

R. W. Borchardt
Executive Director
for Operations

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