

ISLAND

CLOSEUP

NEWS SERVICE

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EDITOR

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FREEDOM OF INFORMATION  
ACT REQUEST

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5-30-79

Joseph Hendrie  
Chairman  
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
Washington, D.C. 20555

Dear Mr. Hendrie,

It's been almost two years since we were together at Brookhaven National Laboratory and I interviewed you at length in the midst of the proceedings on your appointment to the NRC chairmanship. It's been a most interesting period for us both, I'm sure, and I send best regards.

I have been having great difficulty recently investigating the safety situation concerning the Shoreham nuclear power plant, now under construction.

Recently, a boxload of Stone & Webster Engineering and Design Coordination Reports concerning problems in the construction of the plant and found at the Southold Town dump were brought to me. Some 416 of the reports involve "nuclear safety related" problems at the plant. The documents tell repeatedly about construction on the nuclear plant not being up to specification and not adhering to engineering drawings, with the consistent remedy that the specifications and drawings be changed. The pattern that comes through is of a nuclear plant being designed while being built, with frequent references to items not in conformance being left as is, even when in violation.

The reports are numbered 16,000 to 18,000 and after spending much time looking into them and writing a story on the matter -- a copy is enclosed -- I wondered about the reports that might have come before.

I spoke yesterday to Albert Toth, the NRC project inspector on the job and he told me that there were, indeed, "17,000 to 18,000" such reports kept by LIICO on "site."

He said it was "up to" LIICO to let me see them. Ira Freilicher, the vice president for public affairs for LIICO, denied my request to review the reports accompanied by a nuclear engineer.

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Mr. Freilicher said "we're not a government agency" so the reports could not be inspected under the Freedom of Information Act.

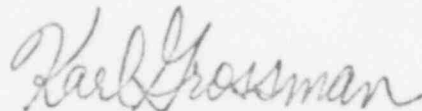
That may be so, technically, for LILCO, but the NRC is a public agency and nuclear power is an enormously government-subsidized and supported undertaking. I note the government's role in this matter, especially through the Price-Anderson Act a limit in liability for the utility in the event of a catastrophic nuclear accident, that might be caused by these problems detailed in the reports.

Further, the NRC, I'd hope, has looked through these safety problem reports and made notes on them.

So, pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act I would like to see the 17,000 to 18,000 reports and I'd also like to inspect any and all notes and correspondence the NRC has on these documents.

Again, regards, and I hope you get a chance to get back to the Island this summer.

Sincerely,



Karl Grossman, Editor

Island Closeup News Service

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enc.

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