

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20540

June 14, 1979

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I am, quite frankly, very disturbed over the recent disclosure of potentially-serious construction deficiencies at the Marble Hill nuclear power plant across the Ohio River from Kentucky near Madison, Indiana. According to published reports the allegation has been made that a construction worker was ordered to cover up defects in the concrete used to build the reactor containment walls. In addition, your agency has confirmed that the construction contractor was cited for failing to make the proper repairs.

The charges which have been made are unsettling, at the least. The question which continues to linger in my mind is whether or not this one incident was an isolated occurrence. There is no way for me to determine if this is the case or if, indeed, there are other examples of unsatisfactory workmanship which have gone undetected. This, I hope, is a source of major concern to you as it is to me.

The fact of the matter is that entirely too many doubts have been raised to justify continued construction of this project at the present time. I am requesting that your agency intervene immediately, take whatever steps necessary to halt further construction, and initiate a thorough, comprehensive investigation under your direct supervision to ascertain beyond any shadow of a doubt that all Federal safety standards have been met and that the construction of the plant so far is in full accordance with all existing Federal requirements.

To merely take Public Service of Indiana's word that all defects have been corrected and that the plant is now in complete Federal compliance is, simply, not sufficient. A full investigation by your agency is the only alternative that can satisfy the doubts that have been raised.

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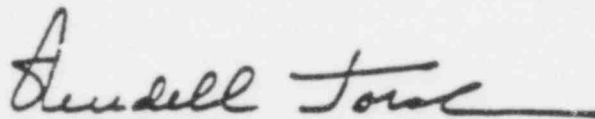
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If there is a lesson to be learned from the recent Three-Mile Island incident, it is that no mistakes--I repeat, no mistakes--can be tolerated in either the siting, construction or operation of nuclear generating facilities.

As far as nuclear energy is concerned, there is no such excess as over-precaution, and I think you would agree. The consequences are too devastating for us to take even the slightest chance of allowing potentially serious structural defects to go undetected and uncorrected.

While this request may be unusual, I trust you will not find it unreasonable. I urge that you assign the highest possible priority to determining the facts in this matter and then taking whatever corrective action may be deemed necessary.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Wendell Ford", followed by a horizontal line.

The Honorable Joseph W. Hendrie
Chairman, Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Matomic Building
1717 H Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20555

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