



STATE OF NEW JERSEY
STANLEY C. VAN NESS
PUBLIC ADVOCATE

September 27, 1979

DEPT. OF ENVIRONMENT & UTIL. FAC. **51-363**

Mr. Joseph Hendrie
Chairman
U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, DC 20555

Re: Forked River Nuclear Generating
Station, Lacey Township, New Jersey

Dear Mr. Hendrie:

The continued suspension of construction at the Forked River nuclear generating station has raised significant questions which greatly concern me as the New Jersey Public Advocate representing vital public interests and specifically energy consumers in our state.

The U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission's role in permitting de facto continuation of the construction permit for Forked River has, I believe, served to exempt the owners of the plant from complying with the most up-to-date safety systems which have been developed since the plant was initially approved in 1973.

The NRC's 14 months of inaction on an extended construction permit also has had the effect of permitting the Jersey Central Power and Light Company to include charges for construction work in progress in its base rate. This amounts to approximately \$500,000 per month so that the 670,000 Jersey Central ratepayers are being compelled to dole out millions of dollars annually for a plant whose future is highly questionable.

I recognize and fully support the decision of General Public Utilities to suspend construction at Forked River in the wake of the accident at Three Mile Island II and its various safety and financial ramifications. But I feel very strongly that any renewal of a construction permit should not include a "grandfathered" six-year-old design that may not meet the highest safety standards.

Consequently, I would like to formally urge the NRC to act forthwith in scheduling hearings that will allow for public participation on the crucial issues of safety and financial qualifications as they relate to Forked River.

It is also my hope that the NRC, the TMI Special Inquiry Group and the President's Commission on the Accident at Three Mile Island will thoroughly review the larger policy issue concerning the regulation of nuclear plant construction

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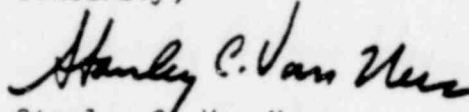
Mr. Hendrie

-2-

September 26, 1979

and changes that are needed to assure the inclusion of the most current safety features and protect ratepayers from being burdened with the costs of a utility's mistakes. Toward this end, we will be corresponding with appropriate public bodies.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Stanley C. Van Ness". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Stanley" being more prominent.

Stanley C. Van Ness
PUBLIC ADVOCATE

SCVN:11d

cc: J. Kemeny
M. Rogovin

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