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San Antonio, Texas 78240

July 11, 1981

Charles Bechhoefer, Esq.
Chairman, Atomic Safety and Licensing Board
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
1717 H Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20555



Dear Chairman Bechhoefer:

I am writing to ask you to reconsider your decision to hold September hearings on the South Texas Nuclear Project in Houston rather than in Austin, as requested by Citizens Concerned About Nuclear Power, one of the intervenors in the proceedings, and by the City of Austin.

From all appearances the decision was an arbitrary one, the reasons for holding the hearings in Austin far outweighing those in favor of Houston. And it appears that the decision once made has been maintained merely for reasons of obstinacy.

In statements I and others have made during these proceedings it has been pointed out that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission is often incapable of adjudicating nuclear issues because of its tremendous bias toward the industry. In a matter such as the one I am addressing now, this would appear to be no less true. Holding the September hearings in Houston would be greatly advantageous to Houston Lighting and Power, whose character and competence are being decided. This is true not only for the September hearings but for most of the hearings up until then. Of the time so far scheduled (including September) 6 out of 8 weeks of hearings will have taken place in Houston. If this is not overt favoritism I do not know what is.

Despite the apparent obstinacy in the maintenance of this decision, I have decided nonetheless to write and appeal to your sense of fair play. You are aware of how crippling a blow it would be to our continuation in the intervention if the hearings are not held in Austin or at least San Antonio in September. I therefore ask that you rule they be held in one of those two cities at that time. In addition I ask, for the same reason, that you hold October hearings, if any, in one of those same two cities. I believe to do otherwise would be to seriously lay open to question your objectivity and your sincere interest in learning all that can be learned about the very serious issues being discussed during these hearings. This statement applies equally to your fellow board members, Doctors Lamb and Hill, to whom I am sending copies of this letter.

Yours sincerely,

Loretta Van Coppernolle
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cc: Dr. James C. Lamb, III
Dr. Ernest E. Hill
Congressman Henry B. Gonzalez

