



TYRONE C. FAHNER

ATTORNEY GENERAL  
STATE OF ILLINOIS

160 NORTH LA SALLE STREET  
CHICAGO 60601

TELEPHONE  
793-3500

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EXPRESS MAIL

April 14, 1982

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

In the Matter of:

COMMONWEALTH EDISON COMPANY

LaSalle County Nuclear  
Generating Station, Unit 1  
and Unit 2

Docket Nos. 50-373  
50-374

Mr. Harold Denton  
Director of Nuclear Reactor  
Regulation  
9720 Norfolk Avenue  
Bethesda, Maryland 20814

Dear Mr. Denton:

This letter is written in response to a letter of April 12, 1982 in the above-entitled matter by Philip P. Steptoe, an attorney for Commonwealth Edison Company. Mr. Steptoe's letter characterizes certain statements made by Dale Bridenbaugh on April 8, 1982 concerning his affidavit relating to drilling practices at the LaSalle County Nuclear Station. The transcript of Mr. Bridenbaugh's remarks is attached to Mr. Steptoe's letter. Your attention is directed to the actual words of Mr. Bridenbaugh, both in his testimony and in his affidavit of March 17, 1982.

Mr. Bridenbaugh never said that his affidavit "did not justify deferring startup testing" for LaSalle. (Quoting Mr. Steptoe's letter.) He was asked by Edison's attorney if he wrote the affidavit to defer fuel loading and low power testing. He answered that his view of the affidavit was to encourage the NRC

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Mr. Steptoe's  
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Mr. Harold Denton

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to investigate the structural review that had or had not been completed, (by Edison) without particularly "tying it to an operating license." In that context Mr. Bridenbaugh said, "my view of that affidavit was not to defer startup testing." He went on to say that the NRC's investigation should be performed before the plant was made operational because of the problems that arise after the plant becomes radioactive.

Mr. Bridenbaugh's affidavit of March 17, 1982 states at page 5:

When fuel loading occurs and low power operation is possible, access to certain areas of the plant, including portions of primary containment and reactor building must be controlled and/or minimized and the free movement . . . by investigatory personnel could be restricted.

The plant will become radioactive when low power operation begins for startup testing. Edison has requested a license authorizing fuel loading and low power testing. The People of Illinois have asked the NRC to defer issuing such a license, until the NRC makes findings as to the potential structural impact of drilling practices which occurred during the construction of the LaSalle plant. If, as Mr. Steptoe's letter states, it will take many weeks after license issuance for fuel load to actually be accomplished, then there is no apparent urgency to issue the license weeks ahead of time.

We are confident that you and your staff will accurately evaluate the statements of Mr. Bridenbaugh, rather than relying on the characterization of those statements by counsel for Commonwealth Edison, when you decide on the issuance of the license in question.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Sincerely,

TYRONE C. FAHNER  
Attorney General  
State of Illinois

BY:

*Judith S. Goodie*  
Judith S. Goodie  
Assistant Attorney General

Environmental Control Division  
188 W. Randolph St., Suite 2315  
Chicago, Illinois 60601  
(312) 793-2491

JSG:bl

cc: Philip P. Steptoe  
James Keppler