

JOSEPH I. LIEBERMAN
CONNECTICUT

COMMITTEES:
ARMED SERVICES
ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
SMALL BUSINESS

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0703

SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20510
(202) 224-4041

STATE OFFICE
ONE COMMERCIAL PLAZA
21ST FLOOR
HARTFORD, CT 06103

203-240-3566
TOLL FREE: 1-800-225-5605

February 16, 1993

Mr. James Taylor
Executive Director
Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, DC 20555

Dear Mr. Taylor:

It has been brought to my attention by concerned constituents, as well as by the National Board of Boiler and Pressure Vessel Inspectors (NBBPVI) of Columbus, Ohio, that metal flanges made in the Peoples Republic of China have been distributed in the United States, Canada and South America. According to a television news story aired December 9, 1992 on WFSB in Hartford, Connecticut, these flanges may be considered a threat to both lives and property. The WFSB story specifically referred to the flanges used at the Seabrook, New Hampshire nuclear power plant.

According to the NBBPVI September 1992 publication "Special Report: The Chinese Flange Investigation," certain metal flanges do not conform to ANSI B16.5 and ASTM A105 standards. (This analysis is enclosed.) This analysis is apparently based on inspections done for NBBPVI by Columbus Metallurgical Services, Inc. and by Welding Consultants, Inc., which used non-destructive methods including magnetic particle, dye penetrant and ultrasonic testing. Conclusions reached by the consulting firms for the Special Report indicate that the flanges were either: (1) not forged to ANSI/ASTM standards as specified, or (2) were misfabricated and "slugged" (the addition of non-homogeneous filler) to correct for under dimensioning or local defects.

Although NBBPVI concludes in its Special Report that no in-service failures related to these flanges has yet occurred, I am concerned by its comments that failures reported during hydrostatic tests or during process inspections may lead to more serious incidents wherever pressure piping, boilers and pressure vessels (including nuclear facilities) are employed.

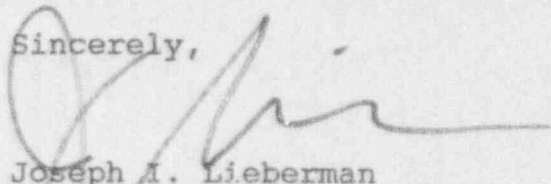
In December, my staff requested that the NRC do a complete review of where these flanges are located and whether they pose risks to human health or property. An interim oral report was provided.

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I am requesting your in-depth analysis of this issue with respect to all facilities under your jurisdiction. Additionally, I am requesting that you coordinate this review with other federal and state agencies. Please report to me on other facilities that may be utilizing or storing these flanges and what steps are being taken to address any safety issues.

Sincerely,



Joseph I. Lieberman
Chairman,
Subcommittee on Clean Air
and Nuclear Regulation

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Enclosure