



Montgomery County Government

ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND 20850

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USNRC

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DEPARTMENT OF SECRETARY
OF DEFENSE
ENGINEERING & SERVICE
BRANCH

February 15, 1983

Chairman Nunzio Palladino
Nuclear Regulatory Commission
1717 H Street, N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20555

DOCKET NUMBER
PROD. & UTIL. FAC. 50-170

Dear Chairman Palladino:

It has been brought to the attention of the Montgomery County Executive and Council that on February 18 the Nuclear Regulatory Commission Licensing Board will make a "summary disposition" on the relicensing of the Armed Forces Radiobiology Research Institute (AFRRI) nuclear reactor on the grounds of the Bethesda Naval Hospital, and that a key part of this disposition will be a finding as to whether adequate information is now in hand and adequate public debate has taken place to make the licensing decision.

On December 16, 1980, the Montgomery County Executive and the Council wrote to the Secretary of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission on the subject of the AFRRI nuclear reactor requesting that a public hearing and an environmental impact statement should be included in the relicensing procedure. We are enclosing a copy of this letter. In the more than two years since this letter was sent, there has not been a formal public hearing nor anything that could be considered a full environmental impact statement. On the contrary, citizen analysis of this facility and reports of an accident in the associated cobalt storage facility obtained under the Freedom of Information Act have raised new questions about current operating health effects, the security of the facility, the reliability of the accident control technology, and the adequacy of environmental monitoring procedures and evacuation plans which have not been publicly debated or answered.

A serious accident of this reactor would have very grave consequences for large numbers of people in heavily populated areas in Montgomery County and the District of Columbia. The Montgomery County Government has responsibilities for public health and safety. We consider that not only must the best available knowledge be used to establish that the impacts and risks of this reactor be acceptable, but also that affected citizens must have opportunity to study and debate the impact assessment. We are not satisfied that either impact assessment or debate has yet been adequate and ask the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to delay relicensing this facility until more complete impact statements have been prepared and a public hearing has been held to discuss the findings.

Sincerely,

Charles W. Gilchrist
County Executive

David L. Scull
Council President

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Chairman Nunzio Palladino
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cc: The Honorable Charles McC. Mathias Jr.
The United States Senate

The Honorable Paul Sarbanes
The United States Senate

The Honorable Michael D. Barnes
House of Representatives

The Honorable Lucille Maurer
Delegate to the Maryland General Assembly

The Honorable Nancy K. Kopp
Delegate to the Maryland General Assembly

The Honorable Judith C. Toth
Delegate to the Maryland General Assembly

Enclosure



Montgomery County Government

ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND 20850

December 16, 1980

Secretary of the Commission
United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D.C. 20555

Attention: Docketing and Service Section

Gentlemen:

We are writing to you with reference to the notice that appeared in the Federal Register (Vol. 45, No. 229) dated November 25, 1980, pertaining to the renewal of the Facility License No. R-84 issued to the Armed Forces Radiobiology Research Institute (AFRRI) for the operation of a TRIGA-type research reactor located on the National Naval Medical Center site in Montgomery County, Maryland.

As the local government officials responsible for the health and safety of the residents of our County, we are sincerely interested and concerned about any possible threat that this operation may present to the employees of the facility as well as the people who reside in adjacent areas.

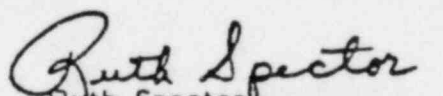
Therefore we wish to support petitions before you requesting the Nuclear Regulatory Agency to hold a public hearing prior to extending the license of this facility to the year 2000. We feel that it is in the public interest that such a hearing be held so that arguments pro and con can be heard and evaluated by the NRC, the agency responsible for relicensing such operations.

Further, the Montgomery County government would respectfully request that an appropriate Federal agency be directed to prepare an environmental impact statement on this facility as it concerns the operation of the reactor.

Your early consideration of our requests will be very much appreciated.

Sincerely,


Charles W. Gilchrist
County Executive


Ruth Spector
President, County Council

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