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September 9, 1994

Mr. William Russell
Director, Nuclear Reactor Regulation
United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, DC 20555

Dear Mr. Russell:

Don Prevatte and I are sending out follow-up letters to the state and Federal officials and news media representatives that we transmitted a White Paper on the nuclear safety problems we identified with spent fuel pool cooling at the Susquehanna Steam Electric Station. A copy of a typical follow-up letter is enclosed for your information.

Sincerely,

David A. Lochbaum

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September 12, 1994

Governor Robert P. Casey
Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Governor Casey:

By cover letter dated April 5, 1994, the undersigned provided you with a White Paper outlining deficiencies in the design of the Susquehanna Steam Electric Station (SSES) for spent fuel pool cooling which had serious nuclear safety consequences. These design deficiencies, initially reported to the NRC by the undersigned in November of 1992, potentially affect another thirty five operating nuclear power plants in this country. Since April, several important steps have been taken to address these design deficiencies for SSES and generically. These steps include:

On May 6, 1994, the NRC staff presented the status of their evaluation of the SSES spent fuel pool cooling problems to the Advisory Committee for Reactor Safeguards (ACRS). The ACRS pointed out weak and incomplete areas in the NRC staff's risk assessment which required further evaluation.

On June 1, 1994, the licensee for SSES committed to the NRC staff to maintain the two spent fuel pools hydraulically connected (cross-tied). This measure significantly lowers the risk at SSES because the available cooling systems from either of the two reactor units may be used to remove heat from both spent fuel pools.

On July 8, 1994, the undersigned met with NRC Chairman Ivan Selin at his request to discuss the specific concerns in the SSES design and their generic implications. The focus of this meeting was on the technical concerns and their safety consequences.

On September 6, 1994, the undersigned met with NRC staff members from the Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation and from the Region I office to review the status of modifications implemented and planned at SSES and supporting analyses. The NRC staff also outlined elements of their proposed action plan for determining the generic implications of the SSES design deficiencies and for addressing these implications.

September 12, 1994

At this time, the numerous hardware modifications, procedure changes, analyses and upgraded training programs implemented at SSES have significantly reduced the nuclear safety hazard resulting from spent fuel pool cooling design deficiencies. There are still a few significant issues remaining to be resolved before the required level of safety can be assured at SSES. The NRC and the licensee are actively pursuing resolution of these remaining issues. Additional meetings between the undersigned and the NRC staff are planned to discuss the final report on the SSES issue.

The NRC's generic action plan for spent fuel pool cooling concerns will hopefully ensure that other operating nuclear power plants with design deficiencies similar to SSES undertake the necessary actions to remedy these problems.

The purpose of this letter is to update you on the status of this issue and to express our appreciation for the actions taken by many concerned state and Federal officials in response to the April 5, 1994 White Paper. The inquiries from several state and Federal officials may have helped the NRC reallocate resources to this issue to expedite its long overdue resolution.

The April 5th letter closed with a statement that the undersigned looked forward to the eventual safe resolution of this issue. We are pleased to report that with the support of many state and Federal officials, we no longer have to look as far.

Sincerely,

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY
David A. Lochbaum

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY
Donald C. Prevatte