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THOMAS H. BATES '84 JAN 23 P12:47
MEMBER OF THE ASSEMBLY
TWELFTH DISTRICT
CHAIR
STANDING COMMITTEE ON
HUMAN SERVICES

OFFICE OF SECRETARY
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January 18, 1984

SERVED JAN 23 1984

Mr. Nunzio Palladino, Chairman
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D.C. 20555

Dear Chairman Palladino:

I understand that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) will soon take up the question of granting a low-level start-up license to the Diablo Canyon nuclear power plant owned and built by the Pacific Gas & Electric Co. (PG&E). It has also come to my attention that recently more than 100 allegations by plant workers about potential safety problems at that plant have been made to the NRC and Intervenors in the licensing proceedings.

I urge you to fully investigate these allegations before granting Diablo Canyon any license to operate.

If any of the well-documented allegations are true, operation of Diablo Canyon poses a serious economic and public safety hazard. At the very least, the charges point to a breakdown of quality assurance and quality control; at worst, they indicate that management of the plant project has engaged in a cover-up of that breakdown.

Before authorizing plant operation, I urge you to authorize a complete investigation by your Office of Investigations into the causes of the quality assurance/quality control breakdown at Diablo Canyon, including charges of retaliation against workers who report problems or mistakes, the falsification and destruction of records, and intentional management decisions to violate the Atomic Energy Act.

In addition before licensing, an independent body should conduct an independent audit of the entire PG&E/Bechtel design review, including a provision for a broad public oversight committee; and a comprehensive quality control re-inspection by an independent body of all safety related hardware in the plant.

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Chairman Palladino
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I needn't remind you that given the troubled history of Diablo Canyon, much of the public views the integrity of that plant's owners with scepticism -- indeed, the kind of problems that have surfaced at Diablo seem to be generic to the industry as a whole. By taking the steps I have suggested, you will not only assure the plant's safety, but also help restore public confidence in the nuclear industry and your ability to safely regulate it.

Sincerely,

Tom Bates

THOMAS H. PATES
Member of the Assembly

THB:ah

cc: Darrell G. Eisenhut
Gov. George Deukmejian
Cynthia Vix
Congressman Morris Udall
Attorney General J. Van de Kamp