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To: saj@nrc.gov,
Date: Friday, May 26, 1995 10:34 am
Subject: LETTER TO SAJ (SMTP Id#: 46397)

May 26, 1995

The Honorable Shirley Jackson
Commissioner
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D.C. 20555

Dear Commissioner Jackson:

First, I congratulate you on your appointment to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and wish you the best in dealing with the problems facing the nuclear industry. Your tenure as Chairperson of the NRC promises to be a challenging time, particularly as the industry takes on the problems of operating aging plants, unfavorable economic conditions, decommissioning, as well as the high level waste disposal issues. I am personally very supportive of your position concerning "risk based regulation" as a means to achieve safer and more economical nuclear power. However, we need to be realistic in assessment of the true risk.

As a brief introduction, I worked in the nuclear industry for almost 30 years. My last position was Supervisor of Instrumentation and Controls Engineering for Northeast Utilities. Unfortunately, in February 1993, my career in the nuclear industry ended when, as part of a settlement agreement, I resigned from Northeast Utilities after identifying two significant generic safety issues. Ironically, I believe that Northeast Utilities primarily was interested in bringing my employment to an end not because I raised safety issues, per se. Rather, it was because the lack of responsive action on the part of the NRC made it necessary for me to become highly critical of the agency. Northeast Utilities simply did not need the onus of continuing to employ someone who had invoked the wrath of the NRC.

Since my resignation from Northeast Utilities, I have been actively working with various individuals and branches of the NRC. I have a very close and professional working relationship with Mr. John Zwolinski of the Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation staff. Mr. Zwolinski should be complemented on his efforts in attempting to resolve some of the more significant generic safety issues.

I have been working closely with the Office of the Inspector General in an investigation into allegations that the NRC fails to enforce many of its most vital regulations that relate to the operability of vital systems and components. In July 1993, at the request of Senator Joseph Lieberman, I testified before his Senate Subcommittee about the failure of the NRC to provide protection to whistleblowers in the industry.

As a private citizen, I have two major concerns with the manner in which the NRC fails to fulfill its obligation to provide protection to the general public. The first concern deals with the continued issues of the NRC's handling of "whistleblower" issues. My concerns are articulated in my letter addressed to the Secretary of the Commission dated April 30, 1995.

My second concern is that the risks of operating reactors are much greater than presently perceived by the general public. It has always been my understanding that the NRC requires all plants to remain in compliance with the risk and the radiation doses to the general public that are stated in 10 CFR Part 100. I now have been officially informed that these dose limits as specified by 10 CFR Part 100, only apply to plants in the licensing stages and that after the license is granted these limits no longer apply. To me this is a shocking admission by the NRC.

The NRC staff has acknowledged to me that there are accidents, with an unknown and high probability, that will expose the general public to radiation doses exceeding those specified by Part 100 by orders of magnitude.

Living in a state with four operating reactors, this is not very comforting.

Some of these concerns are articulated in my letters to Mr. Zwolinski, dated February 28, 1995, March 2, 1995, and March 29, 1995.

I know that, as part of your orientation to your new position, you will be meeting with many NRC staff members, as well as industry representatives, to familiarize yourself with the issues that will be confronting you as Chairperson. I believe that you also should hear from some of the employees who are the "eyes and ears" of the Commission when it comes to nuclear safety. I would appreciate if you could arrange for a meeting with me to discuss some of these vital issues.

Mr. Zwolinski has agreed to make the above referenced letters available to your office prior to our meeting. If you think it would be beneficial, I would welcome the attendance of Mr. Zwolinski and Mr. David Williams at this proposed meeting.

I look forward to your favorable response.

Sincerely,

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