UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20555

October 29, 1979

Mr. Ellsworth J. Andrews
1201 Purdy Court
Lutherville, MD 21093

Dear Mr. Andrews:

This is in reply to your letter of March 31, 1979, to President Carter. I am sorry for the delay but we have been very busy with the aftermath of the Three Mile Island accident.

A number of the subjects mentioned in the pamphlet attached to your letter are discussed in Environmental Statements published by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission in relation to the construction of nuclear power plants. Enclosed is an example of such a statement, which is for the Yellow Creek Nuclear Plant. You may be particularly interested in Section 4.4 on impacts on the community during construction, Section 5.8 on impacts on the community during operation, Section 5.4 on radiological impacts from routine operation (including transportation of radioactive material), Section 7 on environmental impact of postulated accidents, and Section 9.1 on alternative energy sources (including comparisons of economic costs and health effects of nuclear and coal-burning power plants).

We have learned a number of lessons from the Three Mile Island accident and are applying the information to prevent such accidents in the future. We assure you that every effort is being made to ensure the continued protection of the public health and safety at all nuclear power plants.

Sincerely,

Harold Denton

Harold R. Denton, Director
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Enclosure:
As stated

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[illegible]

NRC

Dear President Carter,

I am writing to you because I am concerned. I am 52 years old, married and have 2 sons, one of whom is a physician working in a Washington, D.C. hospital. We are a family that lives in an average [illegible] home community and county. Both my wife and I work in fields that deal with human needs and human problems.

I have just finished reading the Saturday edition of the Potomac News [illegible] "Possibility of [illegible] meltdown" at the Three Mile Island Power Plant near Harrisburg, Pa. Coincidentally, my wife and I viewed a showing of the new motion picture China Syndrome at our [illegible] theatre last evening. [illegible] to say the least. [illegible] handed out [illegible] outside the theatre labeled "Nuclear [illegible]" [illegible] published by [illegible] Potomac Alliance. I am attaching a copy and [illegible] contents [illegible]. [illegible] few of us in this society can be knowledgeable about many subjects, I feel we have a responsibility to ask questions, become enlightened to as many

NUCLEAR POWER FACTS

There are currently 1,500 nuclear facilities in existence in the United States.

A NUCLEAR PLANT WORKS

Very simply, a nuclear power plant is much like many other electricity-generating facilities. Water is heated into steam and steam is used to turn a turbine which produces electricity. The difference is that radioactive core is used to heat the water in a nuclear facility.

NUCLEAR PLANT SAFETY

Because the heating element at a nuclear plant is a volatile poison, there are many problems with nuclear power that do not exist with other types of power plants. Unlike radioactivity, can be eliminated. However, radioactive cores cannot be totally shut down. A coal plant can be shut off by putting out the fire. The nuclear plant, on the other hand, always demands an operating cooling system--even when "turned off." Therefore, reactors constantly have the potential to "meltdown", burning through their containment structures. A meltdown would release into the atmosphere poisons that could result in the death of up to 45,000 persons and $17 billion in property damage (Atomic Energy Commission study). The Emergency Core Cooling System (ECCS), whose purpose is to prevent such a catastrophe, has thus far failed to work in every test. A 1975 fire in the Browns Ferry reactor in Alabama shut down the facility for months, causing over $50 million in damages and narrowly averting a core meltdown. The ECCS did not function as called upon.

NUCLEAR WASTE

In addition to electricity, another product of nuclear power is radioactive waste. About 600,000 gallons of high-level radioactive wastes have been processed so far in the U.S. Some 735 million gallons are projected by 2020. This waste includes strontium-90, cesium-137, and plutonium-239, among many others, all highly toxic poisons. It is estimated that at our current limited level of production, there will be 30,000 pounds of plutonium-239 alone by the year 2000. This poison will remain radioactively dangerous for over 250,000 years. No one knows where is to be safe nor to dispose of this radioactive waste. There are no permanent waste disposal facilities.

There are none currently under construction. There are none planned for the immediate future. The U.S. government has set a target date ten years in the future for the first permanent site. Even this site has not been confirmed. The plans are plagued with controversy, many critics pointing out that the proposed storage will not be able to contain radioactive material safely--no more safely than the present overflowing temporary storage facilities throughout the country. In the Washington, D.C. area, the North Anna nuclear power plant had to ask for permission to expand its waste storage facilities only two weeks after beginning operation. Other temporary storage sites such as those at Hanford, Washington and in Kentucky, are leaking their poisonous contents into the surrounding land and water. Radioactive particles do not disperse evenly in the environment. They concentrate in the food chain. Radioactivity in fish can be 1,000 times higher than in the surrounding water.

TRANSPORTATION

With an increasing dependence on nuclear power, there is more radioactive material being transported on the nation's highways and railroads. This presents the high possibility of accidents and leakage or spillage. In 1977, a radioactive cruddload of refined uranium was spilled on a Colorado highway. In 1978, another truck dumped radioactive material on the Pennsylvania Turnpike. Thirty-one municipalities have now passed laws forbidding transport of nuclear materials through their boundaries, and many states are passing similar legislation.

TERRORISM

Going hand-in-hand with transportation is the escalation of terrorism. With wider access to radioactive material, there is an increasing chance of theft. It takes only 5 pounds of plutonium plus material available at a hardware store to construct a fission bomb. The only preventions for nuclear terrorism thus far have led to severe civil liberty restrictions.

For Isaac Alliance phone: 393-6702

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[illegible] ECONOMICS

One of the more disheartening concerns [illegible] nuclear power is that it is not economical. It is overly expensive. Already [illegible] residents of Virginia have experienced [illegible] 18% utility rate increase because of nuclear power. To understand this phenomenon, certain aspects of the nuclear and utility industry must be studied. First, there are the uranium companies. Five companies control 80% of the market. Second, there are the manufacturing companies. There are only four, with General Electric and Westinghouse being the top two. Finally, there are the utilities. They are state-regulated monopolies. The state has little power to tell a utility company what it can do in the area of plant construction; the state's power rests almost solely in determining if the utilities are receiving a fair profit on their investment. This is usually done by applying a rate of return to the money invested. [illegible] money invested, the more money is made in profit. Which means the more expensive the power plant, the more profit the utility company can expect to get in return. And nuclear power plants are more expensive to build than any other type of power plant currently being constructed.

In brief, a small group of multinational corporations control the supply of fuel for nuclear power plants, an even smaller group of corporations control the construction of these plants, and finally, the utilities that buy the fuel and power plants have no [illegible] higher prices, since [illegible] will insure higher profits to themselves.

[illegible]

Nuclear power plants take up needed capital which could otherwise be used to create jobs. There are several estimates [illegible] by the 1980's the capital needs for nuclear power will be so high that they will adversely affect the [illegible] of the economy, taking away money from other industries and services. Although nuclear plant proponents often point out how many jobs they will create, in reality each plant will only employ 125 to 150 specially skilled persons.

[illegible]

Nuclear power is a government subsidized industry. The U.S. federal government provides a needed [illegible], fuel enrichment [illegible] cost; the development of waste facilities is being conducted at government expense; many other incidental costs are being subsidized by the government including plant security, transportation security, reprocessing and additional development. These costs are not paid in our monthly utility bills, but through federal and state taxes.

Another important hidden cost is plant decommissioning. A nuclear power plant will last only forty years. After that it will become highly radioactive, and must be disposed of. The costs of this have not yet been [illegible], but one facility in Piqua, Ohio was decommissioned at the cost of [illegible]. The cost to build the plant was [illegible] million dollars.

[illegible] also the potential cost in case of an accident. Insurance companies will not insure nuclear plants for accidents. There is a law, the Price-Anderson Act, which limits these liabilities to $560 million, almost all paid by the government.

NUCLEAR POWER MUST BE STOPPED

It is an unacceptable option. It will not solve our economic or energy problems, but will only exacerbate them. We are going ahead, not because nuclear power is the best option, but because it is the [illegible] nuclear industry.

There are groups forming all over the world to stop nuclear power.

In the Washington area, Potomac Alliance is concerned with the local proliferation of nuclear power plants. A major concern of Potomac Alliance is the North Anna plant about 70 miles south of Washington, D.C. in Louisa County, Virginia. This plant [illegible] built on a major geological fault, and [illegible] building of the facility is sinking into the ground, causing dangers of a pipe rupture and core meltdown.

(please cut and mail to Potomac Alliance, P.O. Box 9306, D.C. 20005)

_ I would like more information about Potomac Alliance and/or nuclear power

__ I would like to be on your mailing list

_ I would like to contribute __$3, __$5, __$10, __$15, __$25, __$50, __$[illegible]
$____, to help in the fight against nuclear power

NAME: ______________________________

MAILING ADDRESS: ______________________________

______________________________ PHONE NO. ________