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NOV 1 1979

Docket Nos. 50-282
and 50-306

The Honorable Rudy Boschwitz
United States Senate
Washington, D. C. 20515

Dear Senator Boschwitz:

Your letter of June 27, 1979 to the Department of Energy, regarding the letter of May 18, 1979 to you from the U. S. Highway No. 61 Committee (the Committee) has been referred to the NRC for reply.

In their letter, the Committee says "We believe the Federal government's duty and responsibility is to:

1. Regulate the plant's operation.
2. Regulate the disposal of spent fuel.
3. Regulate a safe evacuation route of citizens affected by any emergency.

(a) The U. S. highways #61 in Minnesota and #10 and #63 in Wisconsin are inferior roads for fast evacuation routes.
4. Provide signals of a catastrophe to alert the citizens.
5. Provide safe and adequate roads to evacuate the endangered area, which will comply with Federal safety standards."

Our response to this statement follows:

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1. The NRC requires each commercial power reactor facility including Prairie Island Units 1 and 2 to operate in full compliance with an NRC issued operating license and appended Technical Specifications.

These Technical Specifications set limiting conditions of operation and surveillance requirements in order to assure safe operation of the plant. In addition, the NRC's Office of Inspection and Enforcement conducts inspections of these plants to assure that the license requirements, including those imposed by the Technical Specifications, are followed properly. To accomplish this, the NRC has assigned a full time resident inspector to the Prairie Island Plant.

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2. The Federal government also recognizes its responsibility to regulate the storage or disposal of spent fuel that is generated in nuclear reactors. The most recent publication on this subject is the Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement on Handling and Storage of Spent Light Water Power Reactor Fuel, U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, August 1979 (copy enclosed). The safety of the spent fuel while stored at the Prairie Island plant is covered by the NRC operating licenses issued for these two units.
3. The NRC does not have authority to directly regulate the quality of designated evacuation routes since this is a direct responsibility of the State and local officials with Federal funding assistance in accordance with existing laws as implemented by the U. S. Department of Transportation. However, we have begun a program involving the licensee and State and local governments which should result in the better definition of suitable safe evacuation routes as well as in the upgrading of other pertinent features of emergency preparedness. This program involves a cooperative effort between the NRC, the Northern States Power Company, the States of Minnesota and Wisconsin, and the local authorities, including the U. S. Highway No. 61 Improvement Committee. This program for the Prairie Island Plant is expected to begin with an area visit by the NRC staff and a meeting with all the above named organizations and the general public. The current schedule would have that visit occur early in 1980.

I trust that this has been responsive to your request.

Sincerely,

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY R. G. SMITH

Lee V. Cossick
Executive Director for Operations

Enclosure:
As Stated

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2. The Federal government also recognizes its responsibility to regulate the storage or disposal of spent fuel that is generated in nuclear reactors. The most recent publication on this subject is the Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement on Handling and Storage of Spent Light Water Power Reactor Fuel, U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, August 1979 (copy enclosed). The safety of the spent fuel while stored at the Prairie Island plant is covered by the NRC operating licenses issued for these two units.
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