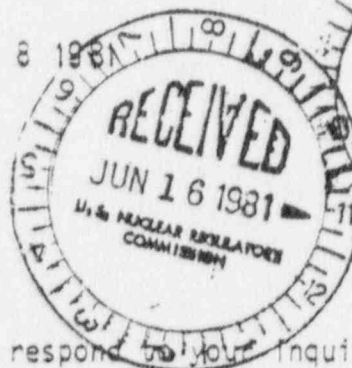




UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20555

50-462

JUN 8 1981



The Honorable Jim Jeffries
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Jeffries:

I am pleased to have this opportunity to respond to your inquiry of May 21, 1981 concerning the licensing schedule for the Wolf Creek Nuclear Plant. The Commission shares your concerns about licensing delays, not only for the Wolf Creek Plant, but for all plants that are being affected by delays in the licensing process. During the past several months, the Commission and its staff have spent considerable time in reviewing the licensing schedules for these plants and have undertaken various approaches to shorten them wherever possible.

For those plants nearest completion, the primary problem is the projected length of the hearing process and subsequent Commission review. Recently, the Commission approved changes to its rules which will shorten by two or three months the time allotted to review of a licensing board decision before a license can be issued. This savings is applicable to all impacted plants.

The Commission also believes it can compress the licensing schedule from an average of 18 months to approximately 10 months by tightening the time allowed for each part of the process and by providing firmer time management. On June 2, the Commission approved both final and further proposed rule changes which would help to accomplish this. In addition, it has issued a policy statement providing guidance to the licensing boards on conducting proceedings so as to expedite the process.

For plants due to be completed in 1983 and beyond, including the Wolf Creek Plant, the major action which would eliminate potential delay is early completion of staff reviews. Staff actions to expedite staff reviews include resumed hiring, mandatory overtime, reallocation of existing resources and transfer of some scheduled projects from the licensing office, Nuclear Reactor Regulation, to other NRC offices. These changes will also help to reduce licensing delays in 1981 and 1982, although the exact time savings depend upon how quickly hiring, internal personnel transfers and shifts in ongoing projects can be accomplished.

On March 18, 1981, the Commission submitted proposed legislation to Congress which would allow it to authorize interim reactor operation for fuel loading and low-power operating and testing before the completion of a hearing. Such interim operation would save at least two months and, where the low power

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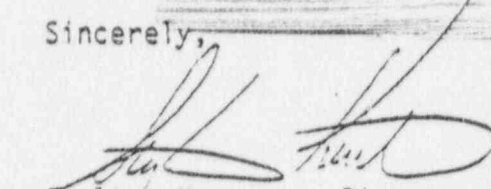
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testing revealed a need for repairs or modifications, could save substantially more time. A provision similar to that proposed by the NRC has been included in the NRC FY 1982/83 authorization bill (S.1207) as reported by the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'Carlton Kammerer', written over a horizontal line.

Carlton Kammerer, Director
Office of Congressional Affairs