



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

OCT 24 1983

U.S. NRC

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OFFICE OF INVESTIGATION
HEADQUARTERS

Ms. Billie Pirner Garde
Director, Citizens' Clinic
Government Accountability Project
Institute for Policy Studies
1901 Que Street, NW,
Washington, D.C. 20009

Dear Ms. Garde:

The purpose of this letter is to respond to your letter of October 6, 1983 to Chairman Palladino regarding your allegation of a quality assurance breakdown at the Catawba facility in South Carolina. This also refers, for background purposes, to your September 14, 1983 letter to the Commission. In that letter, you expressed certain concerns regarding the construction of the Catawba facility and requested action by the Commission.

In your October 6, 1983 letter to Chairman Palladino, you requested in connection with the petition that the Chairman appoint an Office of Investigations investigator to conduct or supervise the investigation of your allegations. Alternatively, you requested a meeting between my office and GAP to discuss how the investigation might be conducted to assure protection and anonymity of your witnesses and an adequate examination of your concerns. Your stated purpose for special treatment of your petition was that construction workers have agreed to provide information to only those NRC officials who are acceptable to GAP.

In being briefed on the circumstances surrounding the two letters, I learned of a meeting between you and V. Stello, B. Hayes, and T. Rehm that took place on July 29, 1983. I understand that during this meeting you proposed to provide to the staff informally data and information that you had regarding the Catawba facility. Subsequently, you have elected not to follow this course of action but, rather, to use the process available under 10 CFR 2.206. In a letter dated October 14, 1983, the Director, Office of Inspection and Enforcement informed you that your requests for action in that letter are considered to be a petition for Commission action under 10 CFR 2.206 and are being evaluated accordingly.

The Office of Inspection and Enforcement and Region II are currently evaluating the concerns expressed in your petition. The Office of Inspection and Enforcement may be contacting you to request specific information to assist the NRC staff in understanding the safety significance of the issues raised by the petition and in determining the appropriate response to the petition including the need for any licensee corrective action and any NRC enforcement action.

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With regard to your October 6, 1983 letter, you indicated that workers at the Catawba facility who have concerns about the quality of plant construction, have expressed to you their hesitancy to speak to Region II personnel for fear their confidentiality will be breached and that they would be subject to harassment by their peers as well as by their employers. In your letter, you actually support that view and state that in Region II there are no NRC inspectors for which GAP can personally vouch.

Fortunately, I have no comparable hesitancy in vouching for the integrity of Region II with regard to their pursuit of safety-related issues or in taking proper and appropriate steps to provide confidentiality. Your reference to the fact that an OIA investigation is being conducted for an alleged case of breach of confidentiality by one inspector does not by its mere existence support that allegation nor does it demonstrate support for your general and rather negative view. I am fully confident in our ability to conduct a thorough and objective evaluation of the matters set forth in the petition.

If you have additional information that would assist us in evaluating the petition, we urge that you promptly provide this information. To the extent that any information may have been related to you in confidence, the staff will take all responsible steps to maintain the confidentiality of the sources of that information. In addition, I would ask you to urge any individual who has information relevant to the petition to provide such information to the NRC promptly. In doing so you should remind those individuals that Section 210(a) of the Energy Reorganization Act of 1974, as amended, and 10 CFR 50.7 of the Commission's regulations are designed to prevent retribution against individuals providing such information to NRC.

I am sure you will agree with me that it is imperative that individuals with important information related to safety matters make sure such information is made available to the NRC so that such information can be properly evaluated and, if appropriate corrective action initiated.

Sincerely,

(Signed) William J. Dircks

William J. Dircks
Executive Director for
Operations

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*See attached for previous concurrences

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WKane	VStello	TRehm	GCunningham*	RDeYoung	BHayes	WDircks
10/20/83	10/21/83	10/20/83	10/19/83	10/20/83	10/20/83	10/21/83

3 of 3

MESSAGE TO:

James Vorse

NUMBER OF PAGES

03

INCLUDED IN THIS REQUEST.

MESSAGE FROM:

OI: HQ

(OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS (OI), USNRC)

DATE:

10/28/83

(Please call or handcarry this material to the addressee).

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