



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

August 6, 1996

The Honorable Newt Gingrich
Speaker of the United States House
of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Speaker:

Pursuant to Subtitle E of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996, 5 U.S.C. 801, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is submitting a final rule to amend 10 CFR 50.55a to incorporate by reference for the first time the 1992 Edition with the 1992 Addenda of Subsection IWE and Subsection IWL, Section XI, of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) Code. Subsection IWE provides criteria for visual inspection of the surface of metal containments, the steel liners of concrete containers, pressure-retaining bolts, and seals and gaskets. Subsection IWL provides criteria for visual inspection of concrete pressure-retaining shells, shell components, and for the examination of unbonded post-tensioning systems. The rule incorporates the inspection criteria of Subsections IWE and IWL to assure that the critical areas of containments are periodically inspected to detect and take corrective action for defects that could compromise a containment's structural integrity.

We have determined that this rule is not a "major rule" as defined in 5 U.S.C. 804(2). We have confirmed this determination with the Office of Management and Budget.

Enclosed is a copy of the final rule, which is being transmitted to the Federal Register for publication. The Regulatory Flexibility Certification is included in the final rule. Also enclosed are a Regulatory Analysis of the costs and benefits of the final action (Justified Safety Enhancement), and a Documented Evaluation in support of the finding that the action is necessary to assure compliance with existing design requirements. This final rule is scheduled to become effective 30 days after publication in the Federal Register.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Dennis K. Rathbun", is written over a horizontal line.

Dennis K. Rathbun, Director
Office of Congressional Affairs

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PDR COMMS NRCCO
CORRESPONDENCE PDR

Enclosures: Final Rule
Documented Evaluation
Justified Safety Enhancement

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Mr. Robert P. Murphy
General Counsel
General Accounting Office
Room 7175
441 G Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20548

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CONGRESSIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SYSTEM DOCUMENT PREPARATION CHECKLIST

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3. DOCUMENT CONTROL _____ SENSITIVE (NRC ONLY) X NON-SENSITIVE
4. CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE AND SUBCOMMITTEE (if applicable)

Congressional Committee

Subcommittee
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