



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

December 3, 1996

The Honorable Lauch Faircloth, Chairman
Subcommittee on Clean Air, Wetlands, Private
Property and Nuclear Safety
Committee on Environment and Public Works
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Enclosed for the information of the Subcommittee are copies of a public announcement and a revision to Title 10 of the Code of Federal Regulations which is to be published in the Federal Register.

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is amending its regulations to update the criteria used in decisions regarding power reactor siting, including geologic, seismic, and earthquake engineering considerations for future nuclear power plants. This rule would allow the NRC to benefit from experience gained in application of the procedures and methods contained in the current regulation and to incorporate the rapid advancements in the earth sciences and earthquake engineering. In addition, this rule benefits from public comments received.

This rule primarily consists of two separate changes, namely, the source term and dose considerations, and the seismic and earthquake engineering considerations of reactor siting. Basic reactor site criteria that have been shown to be important to protecting public health and safety would be incorporated into the regulations, while source term and dose calculations that apply primarily to plant design would be relocated.

In the seismic area, the rule would require thorough regional and site-specific geoscience investigations. The Safe Shutdown Earthquake (SSE) would be employed in plant design, whereas the Operating Basis Earthquake (OBE) would require a plant shutdown and inspection, were it to occur.

Sincerely,

Dennis K. Rathbun, Director
Office of Congressional Affairs

Enclosures:

1. Public Announcement
2. Federal Register Notice

cc: Senator Bob Graham

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The Honorable Dan Schaefer, Chairman
Subcommittee on Energy and Power
Committee on Commerce
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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cc: Representative Frank Pallone