

From: PAUL M. BLANCH <PMBLANCH@ix.netcom.com>
To: John Zwolinski <JAZ@nrc.gov>
Date: 8/5/96 9:02am
Subject: Letter to Dr. Jackson

John:
COuld you please assure that the Chairman gets a copy of this before her public meeting. I think this reflects the feelings of many people in the area.
Paul Blanch

The following is an editorial written for The New London Day's editorial page, published August 1<

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<Written by Maura Casey

A memo to Dr. Jackson<

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MEMO<

TO: Shirley Ann Jackson,<
Chairman, Nuclear Regulatory Commission<

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FROM: A frustrated public<

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DR. JACKSON:

We're delighted that you are coming to Southeastern Connecticut Aug. 6, and are encouraged that you will meet with the press and the public during your visit.

The state's four nuclear plants are shut down and it looks as if they won't be operating anytime soon. The three units at Millstone Station have been on the NRC's watch list of problem plants since the end of January. Connecticut Yankee was shut down just last week. There are a myriad of safety issues to be resolved. The NRC was right to shut down the plants.

But with so much that has happened here this year, the public has many, many questions to ask. One question is why the NRC has been so slow to respond in the past to NU's numerous regulatory violations. Some members of the public are angry, too.

People aren't angry at you, however. You have a reputation for possessing both absolute integrity and keen intelligence. Unfortunately, the NRC doesn't share your reputation for integrity. Many people here don't trust the agency. And even though you've only headed the NRC for a year, you will be in the awkward position of answering questions about the agency's lack of enforcing regulations at Millstone Station. There is also a perception that the agency puts the needs of utilities first and the public last when it comes to policing nuclear plants.

Because there is so little belief in the NRC, the public is distrustful of one of the ground rules of the meeting at which you will speak. That is the requirement that citizens submit questions in advance. Many here echo the sentiments in the July 25 letter Congressman Sam Gejdenson sent you, urging you to hold the meeting at night when more people can attend, expand the length of time the meeting will last to one-and-a-half to two hours, and assure that questions "in advance" means only that questions should be

written when attendees arrive at the meeting.

This is New England, which cherishes the tradition of the town meeting at which people speak face to face to public officials in open and frank discussion. People here are suspicious of needing to submit any written questions in advance of any meeting at all -- let alone at a meeting so important to the community. To them, the requirement smacks of censorship and an attempt to exert control, even though, no doubt, such an impression was not intended.

Citizens are looking for reasons to trust the NRC again. Talk to them. Listen. Stay at the meeting as long as you can. Take questions from the floor. If people seem angry, understand their emotion, however unreasonable it seems, is the result of years of frustration. If people are to believe in the government's regulation of nuclear plants, they will start by making the decision to trust you. If you show you understand that the true constituency of any federal agency is the public itself, much will have been done to restore trust.

Most of all, thank you for coming. People here really appreciate your taking the time.

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