

August 23, 1985

Neil Smith, Chairman
Seismic Qualification Utilities Group
Commonwealth Edison Co.
P.O. Box 767
Chicago, Illinois 60690

Dear Mr. Smith:

As you know, for several years now the NRC staff has been considering the Unresolved Safety Issue A-46, "Seismic Qualification of Equipment in Operating Plants." On August 20, 1985, the Executive Director for Operations approved issuance for public comment of the proposed resolution, consisting of Draft NUREG-1030 entitled, "Seismic Qualification of Equipment in Operating Nuclear Power Plants," and the supporting Regulatory Analysis.

I want to commend you and the members of the Seismic Qualification Utilities Group (SQUG) for the outstanding contribution SQUG has made to the successful development of the staff's proposed resolution to USI A-46, which we believe will contribute significantly to the assurance of safety for operating plants. Largely due to the studies performed and supported by SQUG, it has been possible to concentrate staff considerations of seismic equipment qualification in operating plants on those issues where seismic experience and analysis shows potential problems exist.

The SQUG program is a landmark effort which I believe has set precedents in two areas. First, it has demonstrated the feasibility of using real experience data in a meaningful way. This concept has been extended by SQUG to the development of procedures for effective application of the seismic experience data. Second, the working relationship between the NRC staff and the SQUG, with an independent panel of recognized experts providing consultation and review, demonstrates that an industry group can work effectively and objectively with the NRC staff. Key factors in this relationship were that the SQUG utilities got involved early in the program, took the initiative by conducting a pilot program to assess the feasibility of using experience data, and proposed the formation of the Senior Seismic Review Advisory Panel to provide an independent review function. The SQUG effort has contributed substantially to developing the technical information and understanding on which to base regulatory decisions.

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I strongly endorse your continuing commitment to complete development of industry review procedures necessary for the efficient implementation of the proposed resolution of USI A-46. My staff will continue working closely with you in this effort.

Sincerely

Original -
H. R. Denton

Harold R. Denton, Director
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

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