



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

November 27, 1996

Thomas A. Sheridan, First Selectman  
Town of Waterford  
15 Rope Ferry Road  
Waterford, Connecticut 06385-2886

Dear Mr. Sheridan:

I am responding to your letter to the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) of September 9, 1996, in which you expressed concerns related to a document on emergency planning and the manner in which it was released. As discussed in the meeting on November 6, 1996, in Hartford, Connecticut, with you and Chief Pendleton of Waterford, Mr. Frank Grandone and other officials of the Connecticut Office of Emergency Management, and representatives of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the document in question, Draft Supplement 3 to NUREG-0654/FEMA-REP-1, provides updated guidance to plant operators (licensees) and State and local emergency response organizations on the development of protective actions for the public in the event of a severe reactor accident involving actual or projected core damage. This guidance is intended to simplify the protective action decisionmaking process for a severe reactor accident.

Guidance on the development of protective actions for reactor accidents was originally issued by the NRC and FEMA in 1980 in NUREG-0654/FEMA-REP-1. The guidance on evacuation versus shelter for severe accidents implied that in certain cases shelter may be the preferred initial protective action for the population near the plant. Studies of severe reactor accidents since the publication of NUREG-0654 clearly indicate that for all but a very limited set of conditions, prompt evacuation of the area near the plant is much more effective in protecting the public than sheltering. Therefore, the NRC and FEMA have concluded that the preferred initial protective action for severe accidents is to evacuate promptly rather than to shelter the population near the plant, barring any constraints to evacuation such as hazardous weather.

The NRC and FEMA have documented the updated guidance on protective actions in staff training manuals and response procedures and have presented the guidance at various emergency preparedness workshops and seminars. Most licensees and offsite response organizations have adopted the updated protective action concepts in their emergency plans and procedures, but the guidance had not formally been published by the NRC and FEMA. Thus, Draft Supplement 3 was developed and issued for interim use and public comment in the Federal Register on August 26, 1996. A press release announcing the issuance of Draft Supplement 3 was issued on August 27, 1996, in accordance with standard NRC practice, and FEMA issued a letter to its regional offices on August 29, 1996, requesting that they distribute copies of the document to their State emergency management and radiological health organizations. However, as we have learned, this was not an effective means for conveying the information to local emergency planning officials.

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We regret that your first indication of the issuance of Draft Supplement 3 was the article in your local newspaper, The Day, on August 29, 1996. We intended Supplement 3 to be a long overdue documentation of guidance that had been informally issued and, in fact, was already in place in the majority of emergency plans, and were not sensitive to the impact the announcement of the issuance of the document might have at the local level for certain specific sites.

We would also like to clarify some statements or inferences made in The Day article. The issuance of Draft Supplement 3 does not represent a change in NRC's policy regarding emergency planning. The Commission's policy is that emergency planning is an integral part of the Commission's defense-in-depth safety philosophy and all nuclear power plants are required to have onsite and offsite emergency plans that provide reasonable assurance that adequate protective measures can be taken in the event of an emergency. This policy is not affected by the issuance of Supplement 3. The Day article also indicates that the guidance in Supplement 3 means that officials should no longer wait to assess the situation. This interpretation is not correct. Plant operators and State and local officials will always have the responsibility for assessing the seriousness of a reactor emergency situation and determining the appropriate protective actions for the public. Supplement 3 is intended to simplify the protective action decisionmaking process once a determination is made that a severe accident is in progress.

Finally, we would like to reassure you that the issuance of Draft Supplement 3 does not call into question the adequacy of the State and local plans for Millstone. As discussed in our meeting in Hartford, the offsite emergency plans for Millstone have been formally approved by FEMA (pursuant to 44 CFR 350), and the adequacy of the plans has consistently been demonstrated in exercises. In addition, a review of the Connecticut and local plans supporting Millstone has confirmed that the protective action measures incorporated in the plans are in full conformance with the guidance concepts of Supplement 3 to NUREG-0654.

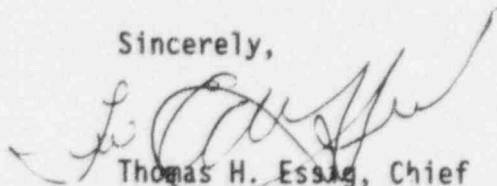
We sincerely appreciate your comments and trust the information in this letter is responsive to your concerns. In addition, we have contacted Mr. Kevin McCarthy, Connecticut State Liaison Officer and Director of the Radiation Control Division, and offered to present a workshop on emergency response for you, members of your staff, and other interested State and local representatives which we believe could further address some of your concerns. The workshop was conducted recently in Connecticut for Mr. McCarthy's staff and has been presented by the NRC in many other areas of the country. Mr. McCarthy suggested that the workshop be conducted in Hartford to give you and other local officials an opportunity to see first hand the Connecticut capabilities for responding to radiological emergencies as an added benefit. However, if you would prefer, we would be glad to present this workshop in the Waterford area. The workshop is approximately one day in length and covers various emergency response topics, including the development of protective

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actions for severe accidents. The agenda can be adjusted, however, to fit your schedule and interests. Mr. McCarthy will contact you shortly to discuss this proposal in more detail. In the meantime, if you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (301) 415-2910 or Falk Kantor of my staff at (301) 415-2907.

Sincerely,



Thomas H. Essig, Chief  
Emergency Preparedness and Environmental  
Health Physics Section  
Emergency Preparedness and Radiation  
Protection Branch  
Division of Reactor Program Management  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

cc: Frank Grandone, Chief, Plans & Operations, Connecticut OEM  
Kevin McCarthy, State Liaison Officer, Connecticut DEP

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Sincerely,

Original signed by:

Edwin Fox for:

Thomas H. Essig, Chief  
Emergency Preparedness and Environmental  
Health Physics Section  
Emergency Preparedness and Radiation  
Protection Branch  
Division of Reactor Program Management  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

cc: Frank Grandone, Chief, Plans & Operations, Connecticut OEM  
Kevin McCarthy, State Liaison Officer, Connecticut DEP

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*Schawaga/RI concurs w comments*  
*East/FEMA concurs w comments*