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D.C.S.

NOV 28 1985

11-211

Mr. Tolson	
Mr. DeLoach	
Mr. Mohr	
Mr. Bishop	
Mr. Casper	
Mr. Callahan	
Mr. Conrad	
Mr. Felt	
Mr. Gale	
Mr. Rosen	
Mr. Sullivan	
Mr. Tavel	
Mr. Trotter	
Tele. Room	
Mr. Holmes	
Miss Gandy	

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The Honorable Sherwood Boehlert  
Ranking Republican Member  
Subcommittee on Science, Research  
and Technology  
Committee on Science and Technology  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Boehlert:

In response to your letter of November 8, 1985, to Chairman Palladino I submit the following information. As you are aware, the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), not the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), has primary responsibility for seismic research in the United States. The NRC is, however, conducting limited research to augment the data available from the USGS and others to provide information needed to make decisions on the safety of nuclear power plants. This research consists primarily of topical seismologic and geologic programs and the operation of seismic networks in the Central and Eastern United States. The pattern of networks reflects the location of nuclear power plants in the Central and Eastern United States. We are presently negotiating an Interagency Agreement with the USGS to upgrade the seismic networks presently being sponsored by the NRC and to broaden the coverage to provide a national network using broadband seismic instruments that will be operated by the USGS. If successfully negotiated this approach will be more economical for all concerned, will provide a broader scope of data and therefore generally better serve the national interests.

In response to your specific questions:

- \* Exactly what changes is the NRC seeking in the seismic program?

The NRC is seeking to come to an agreement with the USGS whereby over the next few years, the seismic networks currently being operated by the NRC would be superseded by new broadband instruments which would be integrated into a national network. The USGS would own and operate these instruments in the national interest. Thus the responsibility for the gathering and processing of seismic data would be centralized. This would also ensure that such data would continue to be developed, whereas the NRC plans to discontinue operation of the networks within the next few years.

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PDR COMMS NRCC  
CORRESPONDENCE PDR

\* What is the status of your talks with the USGS and other agencies that conduct earthquake research or monitoring?

At present there are active on-going discussions between the NRC and the USGS and an Interagency Agreement is being developed between the agencies. The basic agreement will provide for establishing the Central and Eastern United States segments of what will become a national seismographic network. The NRC will provide initial financial support, and the USGS will provide the manpower to design and install the network and will support its operation and maintenance thereafter. We are optimistic that an Interagency Agreement between the NRC and the USGS will be signed within the next few months. Discussions have been conducted with representatives of DOE, DOD, and FEMA, but they have all declined participation in this program.

\* Has the Office of Management and Budget been involved in your discussions?

The NRC/USGS agreement was discussed on September 20, 1985, at the briefing of the OMB staff by the Director of the Office of Nuclear Regulatory Research on the FY 87 budget request.

I can assure you that the NRC/USGS agreement under consideration could only increase, and not decrease, the level of earthquake research and monitoring and the attention paid to that research in designing and assuring the continued safe operation of nuclear power plants. If you have any further questions about the NRC's seismic research program, please contact us.

Sincerely,

(Signed) William J. Dircks

William J. Dircks  
Executive Director for Operations

cc: Dr. W. Hays, USGS

Note: This closes out green ticket RES-85-2031 (EDO-001177).

A copy of the incoming and response were sent to the USGS on 11/21/85 for review and they had no objections.

\*SEE PREVIOUS CONCURRENCE

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OFFICIAL RECORD COPY

The Honorable Sherwood Boehlert  
Ranking Republican Member  
Subcommittee on Science, Research  
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Committee on Science and Technology  
Suite 2321 Rayburn House Office Building  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

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I can assure you that the NRC/USGS agreement under consideration could only increase, and not decrease, the level of earthquake research and monitoring and the attention paid to that research in designing and assuring the continued safe operation of nuclear power plants. If you have any further questions about the NRC's seismic research program, please contact Mr. Robert B. Minogue, Director, Office of Nuclear Regulatory Research. His telephone number is 301-427-4341.

Sincerely,

William J. Dircks  
Executive Director for Operations

cc: Dr. W. Hays, USGS

Note: This closes out green ticket RES-85-2031 (EDO-001177).

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