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February 26, 1997

Mr. L. Joseph Callan
Executive Director for Operations
Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D.C. 20555

Dear Mr. Callan:

I'm enclosing copies of letters I recently received from one of my constituents, Joseph Stankowski, regarding his further concerns about NRC examination of primary piping welds and reactor coolant piping welds at the Millstone 3 reactor (see enclosed letter of November 26, 1996 sent to my constituent by the NRC). Mr. Stankowski worked at Northeast Utilities as a Senior Engineer for a period of 14 years.

My constituent is concerned about any regulatory relief request that may be granted to Northeast Utilities. According to my constituent, the critical welds in the piping that goes from the reactor vessel to the reactor coolant pumps cannot be inspected ultrasonically as required by regulations because Northeast Utilities and the NRC approved of the material from which the piping is fabricated -- material with a large grain structure. My constituent contends that these welds can be examined by x-ray, but Northeast Utilities doesn't support this approach because it would have to drain the water in the pipes -- a process that would be time-consuming and costly for the utility. He further states that the welds that are not accessible could be monitored using acoustic emission techniques.

I would appreciate a response concerning each of these points.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,


Joseph I. Lieberman

JIL:vh
Enclosures

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December 18, 1996

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Dear Senator Lieberman:
I want to thank you for responding to my October 25, 1996 letter to you. Your four page letter, dated 11/22/96, was very detailed and accurate except for the last paragraph on page 4. I have attached that paragraph below:

On a related matter, I was pleased that the NRC has sharply curtailed its policy relating to granting temporary exemptions to facilities from safety and other regulations. I have been urging this change in policy since April 1994 because the old policy appeared to amount to a de facto license amendment without following proper procedures. The new policy ensures that this type of exemption will only be granted in very limited circumstances where safety is not an issue.



The NRC is not telling you or Shirley Jackson the truth about not granting regulatory request request to Northeast Utilities, NEU.

I received a letter from the NRC dated 11/26/96 stating they are going along with NEU relief request ^{M.I. 15 Tue 3 Cont P. 92} not to examine the welds in the critical piping that goes from the MP3 reactor vessel to the reactor coolant pumps and back to the vessel. The critical welds in this piping cannot be inspected ultrasonically as required by regulations because NEU and the NRC approved of the material from which the piping is fabricated knowing the piping couldn't be examined ultrasonically because of its large grain structure. These welds ⁽¹⁾ can be examined by X-RAY but NEU doesn't want to do this because they would have to drain the water out of these pipes which would be time consuming and costly to the utility. NEU choose the wrong piping material knowing large grain piping cannot be ultrasonically examined, therefore they should have to pay the consequences and not be given relief by the NRC. The public's safety should not be put above the utilities inconvenience.

During the 14 years I worked at NEU as a Senior Engineer NEU had a policy of asking the NRC for relief requests to save themselves time and money and the NRC usually complied to their wishes. This is one reason why NEU has four very troubled nuclear plants on their hands now. They have crippled themselves with 20 years of relief requests from Code Regulations.

The NRC is also going to grant NEU relief requests from examining the welds in the ^{Mills 1 RPP} MPI reactor vessel that are not accessible. ⁽²⁾

The welds that are not accessible could be monitored using Acoustic Emission Techniques but NEU does not want to spend the \$300,000 it would cost to install this system.

NEU and the ~~NRC~~ NRC are definitely not complying with your wishes and Shirley Jackson's directives concerning relief requests from regulations that were written to protect the public. I wish you would show this letter to Shirley Jackson.

I have attached a copy of the NRC letter to me and indicated with arrows on the letter where the NRC is granting relief requests.

I have been black balled by the nuclear industry but I would consider it an honor to serve as a consultant to Congress or the NRC to help clean up the mess in the nuclear power industry.

Sincerely,

Joseph M. Stankoski

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