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2-21-17

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

March 26, 1997

Ms. Shirley Ann Jackson
Chairman
Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, DC 20555

Dear Ms. Jackson:

Pursuant to their responsibilities under Article I of the U.S. Constitution and Rules X and XI of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight's Subcommittee on Government Management, Information and Technology and the Committee on Science's Subcommittee on Technology are conducting a continuing inquiry into the ability of information technology systems to properly process year date fields on January 1, 2000. This "Year 2000" problem results from program software that uses only two digit fields to recognize the year. Consequently, many computer programs and embedded microchips will fail to recognize the change in century and misread "00" or the year 2000 as 1900.

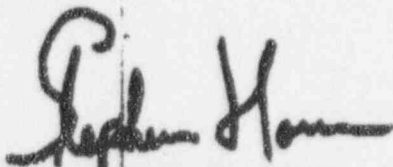
Our two subcommittees conducted a joint hearing on March 20, 1997 on the risks and potential consequences connected with the Year 2000 technology problem. Several of our witnesses underscored their concerns about the potentially serious health and safety consequences associated with the failure of electronic devices containing embedded microchips. Many of these devices, performing date-based computations, may malfunction in the year 2000. Consumers need to be better informed about potential problems with products containing these embedded microchips. To assist the subcommittees in their oversight responsibilities, answer the following questions:

1. Does your agency have a plan for assessing the Year 2000 vulnerability of microchips in electronic devices subject to regulation by your agency, in use by your agency, or that might be purchased by your agency?
2. If a plan exists, provide a copy to the subcommittees. If no plan exists, is such an assessment under way, and when do you expect it to be completed?

3. Have officials of your agency communicated with private industry about the potential consequences of the Year 2000 technology problem associated with electronic devices containing embedded microchips? If not, why not?
4. Who within your agency has designated responsibility for addressing the risks associated with possible malfunctions of electronic devices containing embedded microchips?

Your full and complete responses to these questions will be very helpful to the subcommittees. Please supply all requested information by the close of business, Friday, April 25, 1997 to B-373 Rayburn House Office Building. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact Mark Unsapfer, counsel, or John Hynes at the Subcommittee on Government Management, Information and Technology at 202-225-5147.

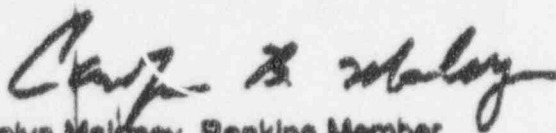
Sincerely,



Stephen Horn, Chairman
Subcommittee on Government Management,
Information and Technology



Constance Morella, Chairman
Subcommittee on Technology



Carolyn Maloney, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Government Management,
Information and Technology



Bart Gordon, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Technology