



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

DEC 9 1977

Dr. Henry W. Coulter, Assistant Director
Environmental Conservation
U. S. Geological Survey
National Center, Mail Stop 106
Reston, Virginia 22092

Dear Dr. Coulter:

As you are aware, on October 24, 1977, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission issued a Show Cause Order which required the General Electric Test Reactor (GETR) to be shut down on October 27, 1977. The GETR is owned and operated by the General Electric Company and is located at the Vallecitos Nuclear Center near Pleasanton, California. Both prior to and following issuance of this Show Cause Order, because of the USGS familiarity of the geology of the Livermore Valley, we have had informal discussions with Dr. Darrell Herd, Menlo Park, and Mr. Robert Morris, Denver, via meetings and telephone conversations. The purpose of this letter is to formally request the advice of the U. S. Geological Survey on the potential for surface faulting within the immediate vicinity of the GETR.

The GETR is a 50 megawatt thermal test reactor primarily used in the production of radioisotopes for medical diagnosis and therapy and for industrial purposes. Because of its small size, the potential consequences of an accident at the GETR are much less severe than at present or proposed nuclear power plants. The reactor core will not generate sufficient fission product decay heat to cause melt-down as long as it remains covered with water. The General Electric Company is presently evaluating the ability of the plant to withstand displacement under the foundation. Concurrently, they are conducting geologic investigations designed to determine whether or not the Verona fault exists in the site vicinity, and if so, its potential for renewed movement. The results of their investigations to date tend to deny the existence of the Verona fault in the Vallecitos vicinity and faults which have been observed in trenches near the GETR are being attributed to landsliding by their consultants. Our position at the present time is that insufficient evidence has been developed to permit us to conclude that there is not a potential for surface faulting in the GETR site area.

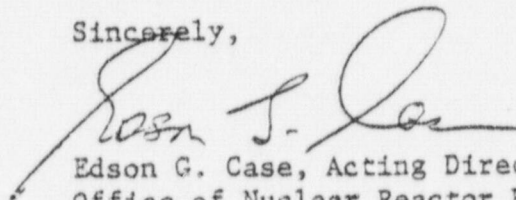
7812190013

Dr. Henry W. Coulter

- 2 -

Enclosed is a copy of the October 24, 1977, Show Cause Order which will provide additional background information on our reevaluation of the GETR site. Because of the age of the GETR, documentation of the original review is quite incomplete. Copies of some of the old General Electric reports which were submitted in support of their original application, as well as more recent reports supporting their application for license renewal, have been provided to members of your staff. I would suggest that a meeting be arranged between our coordinators within the next 10 days to assure that all pertinent reports have been received by the USGS, to be apprised of any additional information which might be available within the Survey, and to agree upon a schedule for the review.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Edson G. Case", is written over a horizontal line.

Edson G. Case, Acting Director
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Enclosure:
Show Cause Order