



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

December 26, 1979

Mr. S. David Freeman  
Chairman of the Board  
Tennessee Valley Authority  
Knoxville, Tennessee 37902

Dear Chairman Freeman:

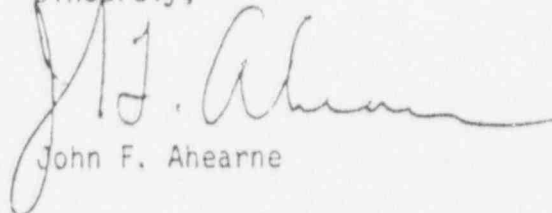
Your December 3, 1979 letter to Dr. Hendrie requested that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission consider permitting TVA to conduct certain activities including fuel loading, zero power physics testing, special testing and operator training at the Sequoyah Nuclear Plant Unit 1 at no greater than five percent power.

Your proposal is an interesting one. While a distinction can be made between the risk to public health and safety from a special testing program at low power and operation at full power, further discussions between our respective staffs will be required to explore the details of your proposed program. However, until the Commission has completed the reviews necessary to ensure that operating reactors are adequately responding to the lessons learned from the TMI accident, only limited resources will be available for reviews associated with issuing new operating licenses.

Subject to this resource constraint, I have asked the staff to review your proposal and to make a recommendation to the Commission in this regard. The final decision on this matter will, of course, reside with the Commission.

I would also like to note that Commissioners Kennedy and Hendrie prefer that the NRC staff proceed promptly in this matter, particularly in light of the ACRS's strong endorsement of your proposal. They believe that the necessary resources can and should be made available under these circumstances.

Sincerely,

  
John F. Ahearne

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