



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

August 16, 2010

Mr. Scott Portzline, Security
Consultant to TMI Alert
3715 N 3rd Street
Harrisburg, PA 17110

Mr. Paul Gunter, Director, Reactor
Oversight Project, Beyond Nuclear
6930 Carroll Avenue, Suite 400
Takoma Park, MD 20912

Mr. Norm Cohen, Coordinator
UNPLUG Salem Campaign
321 Bar Avenue
Linwood, NJ 08221

Gentlemen:

This letter is in response to your letter to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) dated June 14, 2010, concerning prevention of safety problems at coastal nuclear plants that could be caused by the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico (Gulf oil spill). In your June 14, 2010, letter, you sought assurances that the proper federal and state agencies are working in a coordinated and comprehensive effort to prevent safety problems at coastal nuclear plants related to the Gulf oil spill. We understand your inquiry regarding the monitoring of subsurface oil plumes has been addressed in a letter from Captain Kevin C. Kiefer, Staff Director of the U. S. Coast Guard (USCG), National Incident Command (NIC) to TMI Alert, Attn: Scott Portzline, dated July 21, 2010.

The NRC engaged early in the response to the Gulf oil spill. The NRC coordinated, as appropriate, with the NIC and the National Response Team to leverage the resources that these interagency groups provide. The NIC and the National Response Team have coordinated government resources to monitor and predict the impact of the Gulf oil spill and assist other government and private agencies to focus resources accordingly. Among these resources is the Joint Analysis Group, which was established to facilitate cooperation and coordination among the best scientific minds across the government and provide a coordinated analysis of information related to subsea monitoring.

The NRC implemented internal coordination and communication with multiple NRC offices to profile the potential impact of the oil spill on commercial nuclear facilities, both in the Gulf coast region and the east coast of Florida. In addition, under the framework of the NIC and the National Response Team, the NRC monitors all available information on a daily basis to assess the potential for impacts on these facilities. This information includes surface oil movement modeling and forecasting provided by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, situation reports by the USCG and other information provided by our federal partners.

S. Portzline
P. Gunter
N. Cohen

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The NRC coordinated with nuclear sites in the vicinity of the Gulf to ensure awareness and readiness for the potential for oil and "tar balls" to reach any point of the gulf coast shoreline as well as the east coast of Florida. We determined Crystal River or the St. Lucie plants were the only plants that could potentially be impacted. These plants worked closely with federal, state, and local agencies to monitor and track the locations of oil from the spill, as well as predictions for further spread. While the possibility of a negative impact on other plants in the gulf region and further north on the Atlantic Coast was considered to be unlikely, those plants continued to monitor marine conditions and stay aware of any changes that could pose a hazard.

While oil intrusion at commercial nuclear facilities is not expected, the facilities have contingency plans and equipment in place. These contingency plans include utilization of oil booms, half-inch seine nets, early warning devices, and plant shutdown in the case of significant oil or marine life intrusion. The onsite NRC inspectors have verified equipment, procedures and contingency plans are available and are either already deployed, or the means to deploy them quickly are in place. In addition the plants have action plans in place with specific timeframes for implementation of procedures to protect against and mitigate the impact of any intrusion. The plants have continued to monitor the oil slick closely, tracking its progress, readying response plans, and communicating with the USCG and officials at federal, state and local levels.

Although the leakage from the Deepwater Horizon oil well has stopped, the NRC will continue coordination under the framework of the NIC and the National Response Team to monitor all available information to assess any potential impact on commercial nuclear facilities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Allen G. Howe". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each name being capitalized and prominent.

Allen G. Howe, Deputy Director
Division of Operating Reactor Licensing
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

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/RA/

Allen G. Howe, Deputy Director
Division of Operating Reactor Licensing
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

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* By e-mail

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OFFICE	LPL2-2/PM	LPL2-2/LA	NSIR/DPR/IR/CB/SERC	NSIR/DPR/IR/OB/BC
NAME	B Mozafari	B Clayton	JKozal*	WGott *
DATE	08/16/10	08/16/10	08/16/10	08/16/10
OFFICE	RII/DRP	LPL2-2/BC	NRR/DORL/DD	
NAME	DRich by (JMundy) *	DBroaddus	AHowe	
DATE	08/16/10	08/16/10	08/16/10	

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