

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

January 31, 2007

The Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards
Full Committee
United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, DC 20555

Dear Committee Members:

We write today in reference to the Safety Evaluation Review conducted by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission at the Oyster Creek Nuclear Generating Station in Forked River, New Jersey.

As you know, a recent subcommittee hearing by the Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards (ACRS) brought to light modeling conducted by the Sandia National Lab indicating inconsistencies regarding margins of safety for the drywell liner. Instead of confirming the study used by Exelon to determine safety margins used in their relicensing application, the Sandia study indicates that their modeling is inaccurate. The inaccuracies lie in the approach used to determine the thickness and structural integrity of the drywell shell in the containment vessel. While Exelon believes their models are accurate, we have learned that NRC and Sandia staff were unwilling to offer such assurances.

Despite these findings, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission went ahead and issued a positive Safety Evaluation Report for the Oyster Creek application, essentially giving a green light for the application to proceed. During the recent ACRS hearing, however, NRC staff retreated from this position, and stated, according to a transcript of the hearing, that "The conclusion [that the plant meets all safety requirements] will have to await our next meeting."

Noting these inaccuracies and inconsistencies, we urge the Full ACRS Committee, which meets on February 1st, to ensure the safety issues regarding the drywell shell are fully resolved before it makes any decisions as to whether the relicensing application can proceed, even if it requires further modeling.

Thank you for your consideration into this matter.

Sincerely,








