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

CHAIRMAN

November 13, 2001

The Honorable Edward J. Markey
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515-2107

Dear Congressman Markey:

The Commission has received your letter dated October 15, 2001, expressing concern regarding the temporary shutdown of the NRC website for the purpose of performing a review of the material posted on it. Our action in initiating a review of our website is one undertaken by many government agencies as part of an ongoing effort to thwart any potential information-gathering activities by terrorists. The operation of the NRC website was restored within approximately one week--on October 18. It currently makes available many, but not all, categories of documents that were formerly available.

As of this writing, the website includes information on the NRC's mission and governing legislation, how to contact NRC, public meeting notices, Agreement State Programs, the agency telephone directory, news releases, NRC regulations published in 10 CFR, current rulemakings, access to the agency document management system (ADAMS) containing more than 125,000 publicly available documents, information about NRC's Public Document Room, FOIA information, contracting opportunities, opportunities for employment, information on how to report a safety concern, the Inspector General's hotline, and materials on the Regulatory Information Conference.

Our review of the remaining materials is proceeding in a deliberate and systematic manner. We will continue to restore material to the website that is deemed appropriate.

We agree with you that no classified or sensitive safeguards information belongs on the website at any time. To our knowledge none has been found in the current review and we do not expect to find any. Nonetheless, the objective of the shutdown of the site and the ongoing review is to avoid facilitating the information-gathering processes of those seeking to harm the United States of America, while simultaneously providing for meaningful public participation in the NRC regulatory process.

Your letter raises the issue of whether the NRC intends to remove plant status reports from the website permanently. The Commission is currently reviewing this issue and is consulting with other agencies of the Federal government. I will keep you informed of the Commission's final decision.

Sincerely,

Richard A. Meserve