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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-2107

March 5, 1996

Mr. Leo J. Norton
Acting Inspector General
Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, DC 20555

Dear Mr. Norton:

Pursuant to Rules X and XI of the House of Representatives, and my ongoing oversight and legislative responsibilities as a Member of the Committee on Commerce and its Subcommittee on Energy and Power, I am writing to express concerns about the Commission's handling of nuclear power plant safety issues raised by industry employees. Recently, Time Magazine detailed their investigation of an incident at Northeast Utility's Millstone 1 plant in Waterbury, Connecticut. I was deeply disturbed by the reported safety violations at this plant and the agency's reported willingness to turn a blind eye to these problem. According to the Time article:

- * Northeast Utilities routinely by-passed NRC safety standards at the Millstone plant and also filed misleading safety analyses and reports with the NRC.
- * The NRC knew for over a decade that the plant was operating outside of its safety standards, and although evidence from other plants indicated this was a broad safety concern, the agency did nothing to stop this procedure.
- * Northeast Utilities did not take seriously the concerns of their own employees and repeatedly harassed and intimidated employees who raised safety concerns.
- * The NRC may have acted inappropriately by sharing drafts of inspection reports with industry, coaching industry on how to quietly get around safety allegations, and by violating the confidentiality owed to industry whistle blowers.

The reported breakdown in NRC's oversight of safety matters at the Millstone reactor only serves to underscore my overall concern about the imperative for the Commission to be more vigilant and vigorous in carrying out its responsibilities as the nation's nuclear safety watchdog.

It is my understanding that your office has conducted several previous investigations into some of the matters described in the Time article. In light of the recent revelations

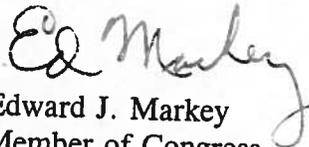
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contained in the Time report, I respectfully request that your office provide me with copies of all previous Inspector General reports regarding Northeast Utilities (including all subsidiaries or affiliates), along with copies of all correspondence or memoranda relating to the Commission's responses to any of the findings, conclusions or recommendations contained in such reports.

In addition, press reports indicate that your office is continuing inquiries regarding Northeast Utilities activities at Millstone and the possibility of similar lapses at other nuclear power plants around the country. I request that you promptly inform me of any conclusions, findings or recommendations arising from these investigations, once they are completed. Finally, I request that you share with me any recommendations for changes in Commission policies, procedures, or rules in light of your office's review of the aforementioned matters -- including any recommendations for remedial legislation.

Thank you for your assistance and cooperation in this matter. I ask that a response to the document requests contained in this inquiry be provided within 15 working days, or no later than March 26, 1996. Should you have any questions regarding this request, please have your staff contact Mr. Jeffrey S. Duncan of my staff at 202-225-2836.

Sincerely,


Edward J. Markey
Member of Congress

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