

Office for Nuclear Regulation

An agency of HSE

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Mark Higson
Department of Energy & Climate Change
3 Whitehall Place,
London SW1A 2AW

MIKE WEIGHTMAN
HM Chief Inspector

17th May 2011

Dear Mark

Re: SUBMISSION TO THE REPORT ON LESSONS TO BE LEARNED FROM THE EVENTS AT THE FUKUSHIMA NUCLEAR POWER STATION

Thank you for your letter of 15th April in which you drew to my attention some matters relating to the Government's proposed Nuclear National Policy Statement, and which you wanted me to consider in the context of my interim report on the events at Fukushima.

Although I believe that you will find the points of concern in your letter are all addressed in my interim report, I thought it would be helpful to you to respond to your letter separately, as this allows me to directly address each of the points raised. Each of the numbered points in the annex to your letter is addressed in the attachment to this letter.

The final question in the annex to your letter asked about the continuing validity of site-specific advice which HSE/ONR provided to DECC during the Strategic Siting Assessment process. My view is that your question amounts to asking whether, in the light of all that we have learned from the Fukushima accident, we would provide different advice if the Strategic Siting Assessment process was run again for the same sites. Having considered this, I am satisfied that, in the light of our considerations of the Fukushima accident, we would not wish to make any changes to the strategic-level advice we have already provided.

You are aware that my interim report will be followed up by a more detailed report in September. However, this does not mean that the responses to the points raised in your letter are to be treated as 'interim', or that it is likely that further reflection over the coming months may cause me to wish to modify them materially. This interim report focuses on the implications for nuclear power plants. The final report will look in more detail and any extra implications for the rest of the UK nuclear sector.

Both I and my expert team working on the Fukushima report, will retain open minds as to what may emerge from our further considerations over the next few months and indeed beyond, but given the high-level, strategic issues that you have raised, I have a high degree of confidence that our current conclusions in relation to such matters would not need to be significantly revised.

I hope that you find these comments and the response in the annex are helpful and address the concerns raised in your letter. Please do get in touch with me if you would like any further clarification on these matters or any other matters relating to my report.

Yours sincerely

Dr Mike Weightman
HM Chief Inspector of Nuclear Installations
and Head of ONR