



CHAIRMAN

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

June 17, 2019

The Honorable Mike Levin  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Levin:

On behalf of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), I am responding to your letter of April 15, 2019, regarding NRC oversight and transparency at the San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station (SONGS). Thank you for acknowledging the NRC staff's work to date related to the storage cask issues at the site. We appreciate your recognition of their efforts.

NRC's oversight program for reactors that have ceased operations, such as SONGS, includes a variety of inspectors with the range of technical expertise needed to oversee activities specific to decommissioning, including spent fuel handling and storage. Individuals from this cadre of inspectors visit sites to observe the work being performed by licensees and their contractors. These activities and the associated inspections are often specialized and limited in duration.

At SONGS, NRC inspectors perform oversight of Southern California Edison's (SCE) activities and programs, such as decommissioning performance, staffing, spent fuel pool safety, spent fuel handling, transportation of radioactive materials, problem identification and resolution, occupational radiation safety, and environmental monitoring. These inspections, which will include unannounced site visits, take place at different times and with different frequency, depending on the activities occurring at the site.

As you note in your letter, through a special inspection and other activities, the NRC staff has been thoroughly investigating and analyzing the issues and adequacy of corrective actions associated with an August 3, 2018, canister downloading misalignment incident and subsequent identification of canister scratching caused during downloading operations. The NRC is monitoring the implementation of corrective actions that the SCE committed to take. However, the regulatory and technical matters associated with the canister downloading misalignment incident have been addressed therefore, the NRC has agreed that SCE can resume their spent fuel loading campaign.

Your letter requests that NRC add a full-time resident inspector at SONGS. After careful consideration, the NRC has concluded that a full-time resident inspector at SONGS is not necessary to provide for the protection of public health and safety, nor is a resident inspector necessarily the best method for effective regulatory oversight at the site. This is because power reactor decommissioning activities present fewer radiological and/or nuclear safety hazards than similar activities at an operating power reactor site. Spent fuel handling and storage-related activities represent a higher risk that warrants more frequent NRC inspection, though

such activities are usually limited in duration. Because of this, the oversight activities at the site lend themselves to continuing to utilize visiting inspectors with different areas of specialized expertise as appropriate to observe various ongoing licensee work activities.

Please feel free to contact me or have your staff contact Eugene Dacus, Director of the Office of Congressional Affairs, at 301-415-1776, if you have questions or need more information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'K. Svinicki', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Kristine L. Svinicki

**Identical letter sent to:**

The Honorable Mike Levin  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Harley Rouda  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Scott Peters  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Susan A. Davis  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Juan Vargas  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kamala D. Harris  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510