



Leo W. Gerard
International President

February 16, 2010

VIA E-MAIL & FAX

The Honorable Gregory B. Jaczko
Chairman
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D.C. 20555

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I am writing to you on behalf of the more than 1.2 million active and retired members of the United Steelworkers Union regarding consideration of the license application of Southern Company to build and operate two nuclear reactors in Burke County, Georgia. I am concerned about the potential foreign sourcing of components for these reactors that, not only limits our nation's ability to address our unacceptably high unemployment rate, but also potentially jeopardizes the health and safety of the public.

This week the Administration is scheduled to announce that loan guarantees will be made available for the construction and operation of these two reactors. These guarantees were authorized by the 2005 Energy Policy Act and were meant to spur the development of nuclear energy. Since the 2005 Act's passage, however, our nation's economy has collapsed and millions of Americans have been thrown out of work. During this same period, we have experienced numerous instances of unsafe and substandard products reaching consumers from China: dog food, heparin, tires and many other products. Recently, officials overseeing the construction of the Bay Bridge in California had to delay construction after it was found that substandard steel and welds existed on bridge span components that were being directly sourced from China. The risks are real and they continue unabated.

We would like to be assured that the products being used for the facilities covered by the license application and the loan guarantees are being sourced domestically. There is existing capacity to provide containment vessels and other vital components here in the U.S. Utilizing domestic capacity will not only help to spur economic growth and employment, but will ensure that we have the highest degree of confidence in the safety, security and integrity of the products being used in nuclear reactors. Safety should not fall prey to free trade ideology nor simply be auctioned off to the lowest bidder. The safety and security of our citizens must be our paramount concern.

Members of my union – and other workers at facilities around the country – have the skills and training; and their employers have the capacity to provide the components necessary to construct these reactors. I would ask that your evaluation of Southern's license application include an examination of the sourcing of all components to be used in the reactors and that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission release to the public information on this matter.

My members and the public look forward to an early and complete response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Leo W. Gerard". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'L' and 'G'.

Leo W. Gerard
International President

LWG/pak

c: Hon. Steven Chu, Secretary of Energy