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United States Senate
COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6175

October 4, 2012

The Honorable Allison Macfarlane
Chairman
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, DC 20555-0001

Dear Chairman Macfarlane:

I am writing to ask for reassurance from you that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) will complete its investigation into the causes of unusual tube wear at the San Onofre nuclear power plant before evaluating Southern California Edison's request to restart the facility. The NRC's focus must be on fulfilling its safety mission and providing the millions of people who live near San Onofre with the peace of mind that the reactors are safe.

In July, the NRC issued a report that identified "unresolved items" requiring additional review, including the manufacturing of the tubes and the modeling of the steam generators' operation. The NRC has not yet completed its investigation at San Onofre, which is a crucial step to understanding whether the plant can be operated safely.

When you testified before the Environment and Public Works Committee (EPW) in September, you committed to me that the NRC would conduct a thorough investigation to ensure that the plant is safe to operate. You also said: "We will not let them start up unless we are absolutely convinced that it is safe to operate…," and your colleagues agreed.

I want to make certain that the NRC fully understands the causes of the unusual tube deterioration, is confident that the plant can be safely restarted given the current condition of the tubes, and has determined that the facility can be safely operated in the future.

I request that you respond to me in writing by October 12, 2012, that you will live up to the commitment you and your fellow Commissioners made to not restart the San Onofre reactors until the NRC completes its investigation and the public has been assured of the plant's safety. Please contact Grant Cope or Terrance Horner on the EPW Committee with any other questions.

Sincerely,

Senator Barbara Boxer
Chairman

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CC: Kristine L. Svinicki, NRC Commissioner
George Apostolakis, NRC Commissioner
William D. Magwood, IV, NRC Commissioner
William C. Ostendorff, NRC Commissioner