



Department for
Business, Energy
& Industrial Strategy

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Industrial Strategy

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Dear Mr Porter,

Thank you for your email of 8 April, to the Rt Hon Alok Sharma MP, regarding EDF Energy. The Secretary of State is grateful to you for having taken the time to write. I have been asked to respond on his behalf.

I understand that your outstanding concern is about the potential for sub-standard construction or manufacturing to create hazards during plant operation. However, I would like to reassure you that nuclear safety and security is a top priority for Government. I think it would be helpful to reiterate a key point that was made in our previous reply, but which, on reflection was not as clear as we would have liked.

The UK have a world class regulatory system and all operators are answerable to a robust and independent regulator – the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR). The ONR is staffed with professional nuclear safety and security personnel and holds industry to account. It carries out inspections to ensure robust safety and security requirements are met across the industry. If the ONR considered any nuclear reactor to be unsafe or insecure it would not be allowed to operate. The most important matter is for any sub-standard work to be detected and corrected.

As you would expect, we do communicate with the ONR to hear their views on nuclear construction projects in the UK. The ONR is also aware of the issues underlying the matters covered in the Folz report and regularly communicates with the French nuclear safety regulator. The ONR has confirmed that suitable measures are already in place to detect potential quality failings at plants being built in the UK, taking account of what the ONR has learned from the Folz report and from the ONR's conversations with the French nuclear safety regulator.

The Department is confident in the ONR's regulation of nuclear power plant construction in the UK. We are in no way reliant on the French Government's scrutiny of EDF's action plan. Furthermore, international peer reviews by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) such as the Operational Safety Review Team (OSART) and Integrated Regulatory Review Service (IRRS) provide assurance that the UK's safety practices and regulation meet all international standards and are in line with best practice. These missions take place at the invitation of the UK.

Thank you again for taking the time to write. I hope this response has provided some clarity on this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Nicholas Butterworth
BEIS CORRESPONDENCE UNIT