May 18, 2000

J. H. Swailes, Vice President of Nuclear Energy Nebraska Public Power District P.O. Box 98 Brownville, Nebraska 68321

SUBJECT: ANNUAL ASSESSMENT LETTER - COOPER NUCLEAR STATION

Dear Mr. Swailes:

On May 3, 2000, the NRC staff completed its end-of-cycle plant performance assessment of Cooper Nuclear Station. The end-of-cycle review for Cooper Nuclear Station involved the participation of all technical divisions in evaluating performance indicators (PIs) and inspection results for the period May 30, 1999, to April 1, 2000. The purpose of this letter is to inform you of our assessment of your safety performance during this period and to advise you of our planned inspection effort resulting from this end-of-cycle review.

Overall, Cooper Nuclear Station operated in a manner that preserved public health and safety. Cooper Nuclear Station fully met all cornerstone objectives. While the plant performance during the assessment period was within the licensee response column, you identified a concern with the qualification of electrical splices in containment shortly after the end of the assessment period. On April 19, 2000, we began an inspection to review the design and configuration of environmentally qualified splice treatments at Cooper Nuclear Station. The issues related to the splice treatments were not used during our end-of-cycle assessment because the safety significance of this issue had not been determined at the time. We will inform you of the results of that inspection by separate correspondence.

Based on the End-of-Cycle Review results, all performance indicators for the cornerstones were in the licensee response column. Additionally, NRC inspections and licensee self-assessments did not identify any findings that were other than green (very low safety significance) within the cornerstones of safety. Therefore, at this time, we plan to conduct only baseline inspections at your facility over the next 12 months.

The enclosed inspection plan details the scheduled inspections during the period from April 2, 2000, to March 31, 2001. The inspection plan is provided to minimize the resource impact on your staff and to allow for scheduling conflicts and personnel availability to be resolved in advance of inspector arrival onsite. Routine resident inspections are not listed due to their ongoing and continuous nature. The last 6 months of the inspection plan is tentative and will be revised at the midcycle review meeting.

In accordance with 10 CFR 2.790 of the NRC’s “Rules of Practice,” a copy of this letter and its enclosure will be placed in the NRC Public Electronic Reading Room (PERR) link at the NRC.
homepage, http://www.nrc.gov/NRC/ADAMS/index.html. More detailed information that provides the basis for this assessment is available at the following NRC website: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/index.html

If circumstances arise which cause us to change this inspection plan, we will contact you to discuss the change as soon as possible. Please contact me at 817-860-8185 with any questions you may have regarding this letter or the inspection plan.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Charles S. Marschall, Chief
Project Branch C
Division of Reactor Projects

Docket No. 50-298
Licensee No. DPR-46

Enclosure:
Cooper Nuclear Station Inspection/Activity Plan

cc w/enclosure:
G. R. Horn, Senior Vice President
of Energy Supply
Nebraska Public Power District
1414 15th Street
Columbus, Nebraska 68601

John R. McPhail, General Counsel
Nebraska Public Power District
P.O. Box 499
Columbus, Nebraska 68602-0499

S. R. Mahler, Assistant Nuclear
Licensing and Safety Manager
Nebraska Public Power District
P.O. Box 98
Brownville, Nebraska 68321

Dr. William D. Leech
Manager - Nuclear
MidAmerican Energy
907 Walnut Street
P.O. Box 657
Des Moines, Iowa 50303-0657
Ron Stoddard  
Lincoln Electric System  
1040 O Street  
P.O. Box 80869  
Lincoln, Nebraska 68501-0869

Michael J. Linder, Director  
Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality  
P.O. Box 98922  
Lincoln, Nebraska 68509-8922

Chairman  
Nemaha County Board of Commissioners  
Nemaha County Courthouse  
1824 N Street  
Auburn, Nebraska 68305

Cheryl K. Rogers, Program Manager  
Nebraska Health and Human Services System  
Division of Public Health Assurance  
Consumer Services Section  
301 Centennial Mall, South  
P.O. Box 95007  
Lincoln, Nebraska 68509-5007

Ronald A. Kucera, Director  
of Intergovernmental Cooperation  
Department of Natural Resources  
P.O. Box 176  
Jefferson City, Missouri 65102

Jerry Uhlmann, Director  
State Emergency Management Agency  
P.O. Box 116  
Jefferson City, Missouri 65101

Vick L. Cooper, Chief  
Radiation Control Program, RCP  
Kansas Department of Health and Environment  
Bureau of Air and Radiation  
Forbes Field Building 283  
Topeka, Kansas 66620
Nebraska Public Power District

Presiding Commissioner
Atchison County
P.O. Box 280
Rock Port, Missouri 64482

Sheriff
Atchison County Sheriff’s Office
511 West Clay
Rock Port, Missouri 64482

Sheriff
1805 N Street
Auburn, Nebraska 68305

John A. Miller, Regional Director
Federal Emergency Management Agency
Region VII
2323 Grand Blvd., Suite 900
Kansas City, Missouri 64108-2670

Robert Leopold
State Liaison Officer
Nebraska Health and Human Services
Division of Public Health Assurance
Department of Regulation and Licensure
P.O. Box 95007
Lincoln, Nebraska 68509-5007

Daniel K. McGhee
Bureau of Radiological Health
Iowa Department of Public Health
Lucas State Office Building
321 12th Street
Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0075

Gary McNutt, Deputy Director,
Radiation Control
Section for Environmental Public Health
P.O. Box 570
Jefferson City, Missouri 65102-0570
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