August 26, 2002

David L. Wilson, Vice President of
Nuclear Energy
Nebraska Public Power District
P.O. Box 98
Brownville, Nebraska 68321

SUBJECT: MIDCYCLE PERFORMANCE REVIEW AND INSPECTION PLAN -
COOPER NUCLEAR STATION

Dear Mr. Wilson

On August 1, 2002, the NRC staff completed its midcycle plant performance assessment of Cooper Nuclear Station. In accordance with NRC Inspection Manual Chapter 0305, “Operating Reactor Assessment Program,” the midcycle review involved the participation of all technical divisions in evaluating the performance of your Cooper Nuclear Station facility for the first half of the current assessment cycle, January 1 through December 31, 2002. The purpose of this letter is to inform you of our assessment of your safety performance during this period and our plans for future inspections at your facility so that you will have an opportunity to prepare for these inspections and to inform us of any planned inspections which may conflict with your plant activities.

Plant performance for the most recent quarter was within the Multiple/Repetitive Degraded Cornerstone column of the NRC’s Action Matrix based on greater than four quarters with multiple White findings in the Emergency Preparedness Cornerstone.

A supplemental inspection was performed involving NPPD’s failure to take immediate compensatory actions following identification of a compromise of the 2000 biennial requalification written examinations. The inspectors determined that you performed a comprehensive root cause evaluation, determined the extent of condition, and developed appropriate corrective actions for this issue. This issue was determined to be a White finding in the Mitigating System Cornerstone, which occurred during the last quarter of the previous assessment period.

A second supplemental inspection was conducted in April 2002 as a result of two additional White findings in the Emergency Preparedness Cornerstone. The results of this inspection indicated that your root cause evaluation did not fully identify and assess all contributing causes that resulted in the breakdown of the Emergency Preparedness Program. These two findings were assessed during the third quarter of calendar year 2001 and remain open.

In response to the Multiple/Repetitive Degraded Cornerstone, a third supplemental inspection is currently being conducted to assess your corrective action plans. The results will be communicated at the conclusion of the inspection.
Additional supplemental inspections will be conducted concerning your performance improvement plan. These inspections will be performed on a quarterly basis. The schedule for these will be communicated via separate correspondence.

In our Annual Assessment letter dated March 4, 2002, we advised you of substantive cross-cutting issues in the areas of Problem Identification and Resolution and Human Performance. These two areas continue to show adverse trends, while efforts to correct these areas have been largely ineffective.

The enclosed inspection plan details the inspections scheduled through September 30, 2003. 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 are tentative and may be revised at the end-of-cycle review.

In addition, the NRC is in the process of finalizing a Temporary Instruction (TI) that will be used to review implementation of the Interim Compensatory Measures required by the Agency’s Security Order to all commercial nuclear power plants dated February 25, 2002. Schedules have not yet been finalized, but it is anticipated that these inspections will begin within the next calendar quarter. Once finalized, the details will be communicated by separate correspondence.

In accordance with 10 CFR 2.790 of the NRC’s “Rules of Practice,” a copy of this letter and its enclosure will be made available electronically for public inspection in the NRC Public Document Room or from the Publicly Available Records (PARS) component of NRC’s document system (ADAMS). ADAMS is accessible from the NRC Web site at http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html (the Public Electronic Reading Room).

If circumstances arise which cause us to change the inspection plan, we will contact you to discuss the change as soon as possible. Please contact Mr. Thomas Farnholtz at (817) 860-8243 with any questions you may have regarding this letter or the inspection plan.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Ellis W. Merschoff
Regional Administrator

Docket: 50-298
License: DPR-46

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Jim Isom, Pilot Plant Program (JAI)

RidsNrrDipmLipb
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DRS Branch Chiefs (GMG, ATG, CSM)
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M. Thadani, NRR Project Manager (LJB)

Hard Copy:
Records Center, INPO
## Inspection / Activity Plan

**08/18/2002 - 09/30/2003**

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<tr>
<th>Unit Number</th>
<th>Inspection Activity</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>No. of Staff on Site</th>
<th>Planned Dates</th>
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