May 31, 2001

Mr. Theodore Sullivan  
Vice President - Operations  
Entergy Nuclear Northeast  
James A. FitzPatrick Nuclear Power Plant  
Post Office Box 41  
Lycoming, NY 13093

SUBJECT: ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW AND INSPECTION PLAN - FITZPATRICK NUCLEAR PLANT

Dear Mr. Sullivan:

On May 9, 2001, the NRC staff completed its end-of-cycle plant performance assessment of the FitzPatrick Nuclear Plant. The end-of-cycle review for FitzPatrick involved the participation of the responsible technical divisions in Region I in evaluating the performance indicators (PIs) and inspection results for the period of April 1, 2000, through March 31, 2001. 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. On June 19, 2001, we plan to present this assessment to you and your staff in a meeting at your Training Center. The meeting will be open for public observation.

Overall, FitzPatrick operated in a manner that preserved public health and safety and fully met all cornerstone objectives. Plant performance for the most recent quarter was within the Regulatory Response Column of the NRC’s Action Matrix, based on a White performance indicator (PI) for unplanned power changes per 7,000 critical hours. This is the fourth consecutive quarter that this PI has been White, indicating continued problems with equipment reliability that have impacted plant operations. We performed a supplemental inspection of your evaluation of the White PI, and found your review and proposed long-term corrective actions acceptable. Additionally, NRC inspections and Entergy self-assessments did not identify any new findings that were greater than Green (very low safety significance) during this assessment period. However, the significance of a performance issue regarding ineffective corrective actions for repetitive failures of the main steam isolation valves to pass local leak rate testing is currently under review as part of the Significance Determination Process. At this time, no inspections beyond the baseline program are planned at your facility between now and May 31, 2002.

In addition, the NRC continues to note a substantive cross-cutting issue in the area of corrective action. During the resident inspections, the problem identification & resolution (P&IR) team inspection and the supplemental inspection of the White PI, there were numerous findings that involve poor problem identification, failures to perform adequate operability determinations and ineffective corrective actions. These findings included ineffective evaluations of deficiencies that impacted on the operability of the high pressure coolant injection (HPCI), reactor core isolation cooling (RCIC) and residual heat removal service water (RHRSW) systems on several
Mr. Theodore Sullivan
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occasions; equipment problems that were not promptly identified on three occasions as denoted in
the P&IR inspection; and multiple examples of ineffective corrective actions for identified
equipment problems as detailed in the P&IR inspection and the January 2001 supplemental
inspection. A cause of a number of these problems appears to be weak engineering support.
Similar cross-cutting issues at FitzPatrick have been discussed in our previous assessment letters
under the NRC’s new oversight process. These concerns were also discussed with you and your
staff during a regulatory performance meeting on April 27, 2001. At that meeting, you stated that
you have begun a number of initiatives to improve the effectiveness of your corrective action
program, including an improved problem screening process and management emphasis on the
corrective action review board. We note that these efforts are in an early stage of development.

Enclosure 1 details the scheduled inspections that will occur through May, 2002. 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 few months of the
inspection plans are tentative and may be revised.

For your information, the NRC is in the process of aligning the inspection and assessment cycle
with the calendar year. In order to transition to a calendar year cycle (January 1 - December 31),
the next inspection and assessment cycle will consist of only three quarters (i.e., the second, third
and fourth calendar quarters of CY 2001). As a result, a quarterly review will be conducted for the
third calendar quarter (July 1 - September 30) in lieu of a mid-cycle review. The impact on the
inspection plan is minimal.

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/NRC/ADAMS/index.html (the Public Electronic Reading Room). Our
assessment process and terminology are further described in the NRC Reactor Oversight Process

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 Glenn Meyer of my staff at
(610) 337-5211 with any questions you may have regarding this letter or the inspection plan.

Sincerely,

/RA/

A. Randolph Blough, Director
Division of Reactor Projects

Docket No. 05000333
License No. DPR-59

Enclosure: James A. FitzPatrick Nuclear Power Plant Inspection/Activity Plan

cc w/encl:
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FitzPatrick

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M. Colomb, General Manager, Entergy Nuclear Operations
J. Knubel, VP Operations Support
R. Patch, Acting Director of Oversight
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M. Kansler, Chief Operating Officer, Entergy
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M. Sorbello, Oswego County Legislature Chairman
C. Donaldson, Esquire, Assistant Attorney General, New York Department of Law
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FitzPatrick

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This report does not include INPO and OUTAGE activities.
This report shows only on-site and announced inspection procedures.