March 4, 2002

Paul D. Hinnenkamp, Vice President - Operations  
River Bend Station  
Entergy Operations, Inc.  
P.O. Box 220  
St. Francisville, Louisiana 70775

SUBJECT: ANNUAL ASSESSMENT - RIVER BEND STATION (REPORT 50-458/02-01)

Dear Mr. Hinnenkamp:

On February 13, 2002, the NRC staff completed its end-of-cycle plant performance assessment of River Bend Station. The end-of-cycle review for River Bend Station involved the participation of all technical divisions in evaluating performance indicators (PIs) for the most recent quarter and inspection results for the period from April 1 through December 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. This will provide you an opportunity to prepare for these inspections and to inform us of any planned inspections which may conflict with your plant activities.

As discussed in our previous annual assessment letter, dated May 29, 2001, this inspection and assessment cycle consisted of three quarters (i.e., the second, third, and fourth quarters of Calendar Year 2001) instead of the usual four quarters. This change was implemented in order to align the inspection and assessment cycle with the calendar year beginning on January 1, 2002.

Overall, River Bend Station operated in a manner that preserved public health and safety, and fully met all cornerstone objectives. Plant performance for the most recent quarter, as well as the first two quarters of the assessment cycle, was within the Licensee Response Column of the NRC’s Action Matrix. This is based on all inspection findings being classified as having very low safety significance (Green) and all PIs indicating performance at a level requiring no additional NRC oversight (Green). Therefore, we plan to conduct only baseline inspections at your facility through December 28, 2002. However, the significance of an unresolved item in NRC Inspection Report 50-458/01-04 is still under review as part of the Significance Determination Process. This item addresses the adequacy of the emergency plan implementing procedures with respect to providing for the protection of members of the general public who may occupy facilities within the owner controlled area in the event that an owner controlled area evacuation is necessitated by radiological conditions on the site.

Immediately following the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, the NRC issued safeguards advisories recommending that nuclear power plant licensees go to the
highest level of security, and all promptly did so. With continued uncertainty about the possibility of additional terrorist activities, the Nation's nuclear power plants, including River Bend Station, remain at a high level of security. On February 25, 2002, the NRC issued an Order to all nuclear power plant licensees, requiring them to take certain additional interim compensatory measures to address the generalized high-level threat environment. These additional compensatory requirements will provide the NRC with reasonable assurance that public health and safety and the common defense and security continue to be adequately protected in the current generalized high-level threat environment. These requirements will remain in effect pending notification from the Commission that a significant change in the threat environment occurs or until the Commission determines that other changes are needed following a more comprehensive re-evaluation of current safeguards and security programs. To date we have monitored Entergy Operations, Inc.'s actions in response to the terrorist attacks through a series of audits. With the issuance of the Order, we will evaluate Entergy Operations, Inc.'s compliance with these interim requirements.

The enclosed inspection plan details the inspections scheduled through March 31, 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 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 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 this inspection plan, we will contact you to discuss the change as soon as possible. Please contact me at (817) 860-8141 with any questions you may have regarding this letter or the inspection plan.

Sincerely,

/RA/

David N. Graves, Chief
Project Branch B
Division of Reactor Projects

Docket: 50-458
License: NPF-47

Enclosure:
River Bend Station Inspection/Activity Plan
Entergy Operations, Inc.

cc w/enclosure:
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For signature
WDJohnson;df ATHowell KEBrockman DNGraves
/RA/ /RA/ /RA/ /RA/

For review 2/27/02 3/4/02 3/4/02

OFFICIAL RECORD COPY
T=Telephone E=E-mail F=Fax
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This report does not include INPO and OUTAGE activities. This report shows only on-site and announced inspection procedures.