

February 17, 2000

Mr. W. R. McCollum, Jr.
Vice President, Oconee Site
Duke Energy Corporation
7800 Rochester Highway
Seneca, SC 29672

SUBJECT: OCONEE NUCLEAR STATION, UNITS 1, 2 AND 3 RE: SITE-SPECIFIC
WORKSHEETS FOR USE IN THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION'S
SIGNIFICANCE DETERMINATION PROCESS (TAC NO. MA6544)

Dear Mr. McCollum:

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with one of the key implementation tools to be used by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) in the revised reactor oversight process that is currently expected to be implemented at Oconee Nuclear Station, Units 1, 2, and 3 in April 2000. Enclosed is a draft of the Risk-Informed Inspection Notebook that has been developed for the Oconee Nuclear Station, Units 1, 2, and 3, including the Significance Determination Process (SDP) worksheets, for your review. A final version will be used by inspectors to risk-characterize inspection findings. The SDP is discussed in more detail below.

On January 8, 1999, the NRC staff described to the Commission, plans and recommendations to improve the reactor oversight process in SECY-99-007, "Recommendations for Reactor Oversight Process Improvements." SECY-99-007 is available on the NRC's web site at www.nrc.gov/NRC/COMMISSION/SECYS/index.html. The new process, developed with stakeholder involvement, is designed around a risk-informed framework, which is intended to focus both the NRC's and licensee's attention and resources on those issues of more risk significance.

The performance assessment portion of the new process involves the use of both licensee-submitted performance indicator data and inspection findings that have been appropriately categorized based on their risk significance. In order to properly categorize an inspection finding, the NRC has developed the SDP. This process was described to the Commission in SECY-99-007A, "Recommendations for Reactor Oversight Process Improvements (Follow-up to SECY-99-007)," dated March 22, 1999, also available at the same NRC web site noted above.

The SDP for power operations involves evaluating an inspection finding's impact on the plant's capability: to limit the frequency of initiating events; to ensure the availability, reliability, and capability of mitigating systems; and to ensure the integrity of the fuel cladding, reactor coolant system, and containment barriers. As described in SECY-99-007A, the SDP involves the use of three tables. Table 1 is the estimated likelihood for initiating event occurrence during the degraded period. Table 2 describes how the significance is determined based on remaining mitigation system capabilities. Table 3 provides the bases for the failure probabilities associated with the remaining mitigation equipment and strategies.

As a result of the recently concluded pilot plant review effort, the NRC has determined that site-specific risk data is needed in order to provide a repeatable determination of the significance of an issue. Therefore, the NRC has contracted with Brookhaven National Laboratory (BNL) to develop the enclosed site-specific worksheets to be used in the SDP review. These worksheets were developed based on your Individual Plant Examination (IPE) submittals that were requested by Generic Letter 88-20. The NRC plans to use this site-specific information and the information you generated on risk significance determination worksheets for Oconee that was supplied in your letter dated November 30, 1999, to evaluate the significance of issues identified at your facility when the revised reactor oversight process is implemented industry-wide.

It is recognized that the IPE utilized during this effort may not contain current information. Therefore, the NRC or its contractor will conduct a site visit before April 2000 to discuss with your staff any notebook changes or corrections that may be appropriate. Specific dates for the site visit have not been determined, but will be communicated to you in the near future. The NRC is not requesting a written response or comments on the enclosed worksheets developed by BNL.

Sincerely,

/RA/

David E. LaBarge, Senior Project Manager, Section 1
Project Directorate II
Division of Licensing Project Management
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket Nos. 50-269, 50-270, and 50-287

Enclosure: Risk-Informed Inspection Notebook

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David E. LaBarge, Senior Project Manager, Section 1
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