

June 23, 2000

Mr. Robert G. Byram
Senior Vice President
and Chief Nuclear Officer
PP&L, Inc.
2 North Ninth Street
Allentown, PA 18101

SUBJECT: SITE-SPECIFIC WORKSHEETS FOR USE IN THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY
COMMISSION'S SIGNIFICANCE DETERMINATION PROCESS
(TAC NO. MA6544)

Dear Mr. Byram:

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, which was implemented at the Susquehanna Steam Electric Station in April 2000. Included in the enclosed Risk-Informed Inspection Notebooks are the Significance Determination Process (SDP) worksheets that inspectors will be using 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; ensure the availability, reliability, and capability of mitigating systems; and 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, and Table 3 provides the bases for the failure probabilities associated with the remaining mitigation equipment and strategies.

R. Byram

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As a result of the 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 Lab (BNL) to develop site-specific worksheets to be used in the SDP review. These enclosed worksheets were developed based on your Individual Plant Examination (IPE) submittals that were requested by Generic Letter 88-20. The NRC began using this site-specific information in evaluating the significance of issues identified at your facility when the revised reactor oversight process was implemented industry wide. The NRC is not requesting a written response or comments on the enclosed worksheets developed by BNL.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 301-415-1312.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Robert G. Schaaf, Project Manager, Section 1
Project Directorate I
Division of Licensing Project Management
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket Nos. 50-387 and 50-388

Enclosure: As stated

cc w/encl: See next page

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RISK-INFORMED INSPECTION NOTEBOOK FOR
SUSQUEHANNA STEAM ELECTRIC STATION

ENCLOSURE