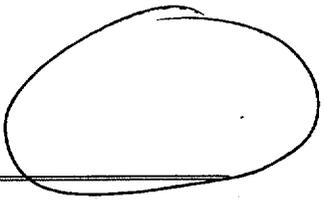


Restart Authorization - Millstone 3



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June 29, 1998

Mr. Bruce Kenyon
President and Chief Executive Officer
Northeast Nuclear Energy Company
P.O. Box 128
Waterford, CT 06385

Dear Mr. Kenyon:

On June 15, 1998, the Commission concurred in the NRC staff's assessment that Northeast Nuclear Energy Company (NNECO) had taken appropriate corrective actions to support the restart of Millstone Unit 3 and provided its restart authorization, subject to satisfactory completion of all remaining issues requiring NRC verification. As I noted in my letter of June 16, 1998, the Commission's restart authorization resulted in Unit 3 being categorized as a watch list Category 2 plant instead of a Category 3 plant. As part of its restart authorization, I was designated by the Commission as the NRC's senior manager responsible for verifying that appropriate aspects of Inspection Manual Chapter (MC) 0350, "Staff Guidelines for Restart Approval," are completed and for approving commencement of actions to restart Unit 3. In your June 29, 1998, letter, you stated that Millstone Unit 3 was ready for restart. After careful review of the results of your restart-related activities and the staff's assessment of these results, I have concluded that Millstone Unit 3 is ready for restart. A summary of the NRC's review activities follows.

Millstone Unit 3 was shutdown on March 30, 1996, after it was determined that containment isolation valves for the auxiliary feedwater turbine-driven pump were inoperable because the valves did not meet NRC requirements. On August 14, 1996, the NRC issued a Confirmatory Order (Order) directing NNECO to contract with a third-party to implement an Independent Corrective Action Verification Program (ICAVP) to verify the adequacy of your efforts to establish adequate design bases and design controls. On October 24, 1996, the NRC issued an Order directing that before restarting any Millstone unit, NNECO develop and submit to the NRC a comprehensive plan for reviewing and dispositioning safety issues raised by your employees and for ensuring that employees who raise safety concerns can do so without fear of retaliation. This Order directed NNECO to retain an independent third-party to oversee implementation of your comprehensive plan.

In November 1996, the NRC created a new organization, the Special Projects Office (SPO) within the Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation, to provide a specific management focus on licensing and inspection activities required to support an NRC decision on restart of the Millstone units. The staff's inspection and assessment efforts were conducted in accordance with MC 0350, including the development of a specific Restart Assessment Plan (RAP) for each Millstone unit. The RAP was revised several times to capture emerging issues and was the major tool used by the Millstone Restart Assessment Panel (Panel) to track

Millstone recovery efforts.

The NRC has performed many inspections since March 1996, to evaluate NNECO's progress in resolving performance issues. These activities included oversight and inspections of the ICAVP and employee concerns program (ECP), augmented resident inspector staff inspections, specialist reviews of discrete areas by SPO, regional, and headquarters staff, and multi-disciplined team inspections. These efforts included inspection of 86 technical and programmatic restart issues contained in revision 4 of the NRC's RAP. Public meetings were conducted approximately every 6-8 weeks to solicit public input on the Millstone recovery activities, and many publicly observable meetings on both technical and programmatic issues were conducted at the site. An operational safety team inspection was conducted during April 1998, and a public exit was held on May 5, 1998. Seven Commission meetings were conducted to provide the status of recovery efforts at Millstone, including the two most recent meetings held on May 1 and June 2, 1998, during which the restart readiness of Unit 3 was specifically addressed.

These NRC activities, inspections, and licensing reviews led to additional issues that had to be addressed before Unit 3 could restart. The staff provided the Commission with its final assessment of key Unit 3 RAP issues in SECY 98-090, "Selected Issues Related to Recovery of Millstone Nuclear Power Station, Unit 3," dated April 24, 1998, and in SECY 98-119, "Remaining Issues Related to Recovery of Millstone Nuclear Power Station, Unit 3," dated May 28, 1998. In SECY 98-119, the staff concluded that Northeast Nuclear Energy Company (NNECO) had taken appropriate corrective actions to support restart of Millstone Unit 3. Over the past month, the Panel has met frequently to review NNECO's efforts to resolve the remaining restart-related issues at Unit 3 and they have concluded that the issues have been adequately addressed to support the safe restart of Millstone Unit 3.

As noted in the Director of SPO's letter dated June 16, 1998, the NRC will formally monitor your restart and power ascension program. This letter was written in response to Mr. Martin Bowling's letter of May 20, 1998, in which he detailed NNECO's restart and power ascension program and provided several commitments, including the identification of four specific hold points during the ascension to full power. The commitments indicate that NNECO will assess plant and organizational performance at each of these hold points, review the results of each of these assessments with the NRC, and disposition any NRC concerns before increasing power. These assessments should be coordinated with the NRC resident inspectors.

In summary, the NRC agrees that Millstone Unit 3 is ready for restart. I am hereby providing my authorization for NNECO to commence activities to restart Unit 3. If you have any questions regarding this matter, do not hesitate to call me.

Sincerely,

Original signed by:

L. Joseph Callan

Executive Director
for Operations

Docket No. 50-423

