

July 10, 2000

Mr. Michael J. Mulligan
5420 Maldie Court
Sugar Hill, GA 30518

Subject: CONCERNS YOU RAISED TO THE NRC REGARDING THE OYSTER CREEK
FIRE BRIGADE

Dear Mr. Mulligan:

This letter refers to the concerns that you expressed to Mr. V. Dricks, of the Office of Public Affairs, on May 30, 2000, related to the Oyster Creek Nuclear Generating Station. You were concerned with the ability of the fire brigade to perform its function based on an event which occurred on August 1, 1997, and on the recent response of the fire brigade, as documented in NRC Inspection Report No. 05000219/2000-004. In addition, you suggested that an uncorrected long term and deep seated problem existed and requested five surprise drills.

In general, our findings at Oyster Creek, along with the licensee's assessments, have shown acceptable performance of the fire brigade during drills (see NRC Inspection Reports 50-219/97-04, 97-07, 98-03, and SALP Report 50-289/98-99). While the recent response of the fire brigade called into question its effectiveness, the NRC inspection report also notes that the licensee properly determined that the fire drill did not meet expectations and initiated the corrective actions. The NRC inspector also concluded that the remedial actions taken were appropriate. In addition, the NRC inspector reviewed fire drill reports, both before and after the drill, and found that they met all drill expectations. The event and recent fire drill response to which you referred appear to be isolated and separated by nearly three years. Therefore, we feel Oyster Creek conducts adequate fire brigade training, identifies deficiencies when they occur, and initiates appropriate corrective actions.

As part of our new Reactor Oversight Process, our resident inspectors perform periodic tours focused on the fire protection material conditions and an annual observation of at least one plant fire drill. The NRC triennial fire protection inspection performs a more in-depth inspection from design, operational and material condition points of view. During each inspection, the inspectors also verify that the licensee is identifying issues and entering them in the corrective action system. Every three months the NRC reviews the most recent performance indicators and inspection findings to detect changes in licensee performance. In addition, every six months these reviews result in letters which discuss licensee performance (including human performance) and outline any NRC follow-up actions beyond the baseline inspection program. We believe the NRC inspection and oversight process provide an adequate basis for determining licensee performance and detecting trends without the need for surprise drills.

Mr. M. Mulligan

2

In this letter, we have provided our assessment of the facts as we understand them for the event about which you have expressed concern and believe that we are being responsive to that concern. However, if you still have concerns regarding NRC inspection activities at the Oyster Creek Nuclear Generating Station, please feel free to contact the Inspector General at:

Office of the Inspector General
D33 Two White Flint North
11545 Rockville Pike
Rockville, MD 20852-2738
1-800-233-3497

Thank you for notifying us of your concerns. Should you have any additional questions, or if the NRC can be of further assistance in this matter, please call me at 610-337-5146.

Sincerely,

/RA/

John F. Rogge, Chief
Projects Branch 7
Division of Reactor Projects

Docket No. 50-219

Mr. M. Mulligan

3

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