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ROBERT C. MECREDY
Vice President
Nuclear Operations

July 31, 2000

U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Document Control Desk
Attn: Guy S. Vissing
Project Directorate I
Washington, D.C. 20555

Subject: Special Report
Inoperable Radiation Monitor
R.E. Ginna Nuclear Power Plant
Docket No. 50-244

Dear Mr. Vissing:

Over the past year, Rochester Gas and Electric has noted recurrent "spiking" in Radiation Monitor RM-15A. In the past, we have declared the monitor operable following corrective maintenance, only to have the monitor again "spike" and then be declared inoperable a short time later. In order to determine if the current maintenance has been effective in mitigating the occurrence of intermittent spiking of the unit, the monitor is currently being maintained available, but declared inoperable, under a Corrective Maintenance plan. The current plan will result in radiation monitor RM-15A being inoperable for more than 30 days on August 3, 2000. This Special Report is submitted, in anticipation of August 3, in accordance with the Ginna Station Offsite Dose Calculation Manual (ODCM) Procedure CHA-RETS-ODCM, Section III.A.2.b and Table III-2, outlining the action taken, the cause of the inoperability, and the plans and schedule for restoring the system to operable status.

Radiation monitor RM-15A is the plant air ejector monitor which detects primary-to-secondary side leakage of the steam generators by monitoring noble gas in a sample of air exhausted from the main condenser air ejector. The detailed operational history leading to the monitor's current status of being declared inoperable is listed below.

The first occurrence of spiking of the RM-15A monitor, significant enough to declare the monitor inoperable, was in June, 1999. That occurrence was thought, at that time, to be a real event due to its duration, but no source of noble gas could be located.

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A second occurrence, in May 2000, resulted in Instrument and Control (I&C) technicians performing additional trouble-shooting and corrective maintenance activities, which included measuring voltages, cleaning electronic cards, replacing the detector cable, replacing capacitors in the power supply, and cleaning ground connections. After completion of these initial maintenance activities, it was decided to obtain the services of a technical representative from the equipment manufacturer to provide on-site assistance in these activities. The technical representative reviewed previous maintenance performed on RM-15A and agreed that appropriate corrective maintenance had been performed. Additional monitoring equipment to attempt to better isolate the source of the spiking (should it occur again) was installed. The monitor was again returned to operable status.

In July 2000, RM-15A spiked again. On July 4, 2000 at 0614 EDST, the RM-15A skid was declared inoperable because it was alarming due to intermittent spiking of the unit. This time, because of the more focused monitoring, a fault was captured on the Pulse Height Analyzer (PHA) board. Subsequent maintenance effort has included the replacement of the PHA board. Based on this identification and replacement, we are reasonably certain that the faulted PHA board was the cause of the spiking. The RM-15A monitor is still declared inoperable, but continues to remain capable of detecting radiation and providing the alarm function for radiation exceeding its alarm set point. As a conservative approach, additional monitoring has been set up to capture and further isolate the cause of any future spiking. Also, daily grab samples of the main condenser air ejector effluent are being taken while the RM-15A monitor is declared inoperable. If no spikes are received by approximately August 10, 2000, then the monitor will be declared operable.

We will inform the U.S. NRC Ginna Senior Resident Inspector of any changes in this schedule.

Very truly yours,

Robert C. Mecredy

xc: Mr. Guy S. Vissing (Mail Stop 8C2)
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U.S. NRC Ginna Senior Resident Inspector