

November 20, 2000

Mr. David Lochbaum
Nuclear Safety Engineer
Union of Concerned Scientists
1707 H Street NW, Suite 600
Washington, DC 20006-3919

Dear Mr. Lochbaum:

By letter dated August 29, 2000, you provided comments on Consumers Energy Company's (CEC's) application dated April 27, 2000, for a license amendment to revise the expiration date of the Operating License for the Palisades Plant from March 14, 2007, to March 24, 2011. You also commented on CEC's July 6, 2000, response to the NRC staff's request for additional information (RAI) regarding CEC's February 21, 2000, letter forwarding a reevaluation of the Palisades reactor vessel neutron fluence. In this reevaluation, CEC concludes that the Palisades reactor vessel will not reach the pressurized thermal shock screening criteria of 10 CFR 50.61 until at least the year 2014. Your comments included a number of technical considerations about CEC's July 6, 2000, response to the NRC staff's RAI regarding (1) use of dosimetry results to check the reactor vessel's chemical composition, (2) the computer code SIMULATE-3's treatment of cross-flow or mixing of coolant between fuel assemblies, (3) comparisons of SIMULATE-3's calculated results to measured in-core temperatures and fuel assembly powers, and (4) a 2-percent underpower operating condition from Cycle 1 to Cycle 12 due to an error in the calibration of a feedwater flow venturi.

In a letter dated October 4, 2000, I addressed several of your comments, but noted that your technical considerations stated above involved matters of ongoing NRC staff review, and therefore, we would address these items upon completion of our review. The NRC staff has considered your technical issues during its review of the Palisades neutron fluence submittals and has addressed these issues in the resulting NRC staff safety evaluation that was forwarded to CEC as an enclosure to a letter dated November 14, 2000. The November 14, 2000, letter and its enclosed safety evaluation will be available on the ADAMS Public Library component on the NRC's web site (the Electronic Reading Room) using ADAMS Accession No. ML003768802 on November 21, 2000. As stated therein, the letter does not authorize operation of Palisades beyond the current Operating License expiration date (March 14, 2007); rather, CEC's application for amendment, dated April 27, 2000, to this end, will be addressed by the NRC by separate correspondence in the near future.

D. Lochbaum

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Thank you for your participation in this matter. I trust that my letter of October 4, 2000, and my letter of November 14, 2000, with its enclosed safety evaluation, have been responsive to your letter of August 29, 2000. If you have any questions, please contact me at (301) 415-3049 or by e-mail at dsh@nrc.gov.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Darl S. Hood, Senior Project Manager, Section 1
Project Directorate III
Division of Licensing Project Management
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

D. Lochbaum

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Thank you for your participation in this matter. I trust that my letter of October 4, 2000, and my letter of November 14, 2000, with its enclosed safety evaluation, have been responsive to your letter of August 29, 2000. If you have any questions, please contact me at (301) 415-3049 or by e-mail at dsh@nrc.gov.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Darl S. Hood, Senior Project Manager, Section 1
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Division of Licensing Project Management
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

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