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December 12, 2000

U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Document Control Desk
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Subject: Duke Energy Corporation
Oconee Nuclear Station Units 1, 2 and 3
Docket Nos.: 50-269, 50-270 and 50-287
NRC Operational Safeguards Response Evaluation for Oconee

Reference: NRC Inspection Reports Nos. 50-269/00-09, 50-270/00-09, and 50-287/00-09

The referenced inspection report discusses an Unresolved Item involving the failure to interdict a simulated intruder during one of four force-on-force exercises. The significance of this issue is currently under evaluation by the NRC. Accordingly, we would like to offer our basis for concluding that this item does not constitute a safety significant issue.

The Oconee Security Force demonstrated excellent response capabilities during the first three exercises. During the final exercise, a simulated adversary did reach a target location. However, this was accomplished only through the use of a particular hand held tool. During the scenario briefing before the drill, and again in our evaluation, which was provided to you on June 28, 2000, we questioned whether the use of this particular hand tool was appropriate. Subsequent NRC guidance, dated August 29, 2000, regarding equipment allowed for forcible entry, precludes the use of the particular tool in question. In addition, it is our understanding that the use of this same tool has been challenged and appropriately disallowed during a recent inspection at another facility.

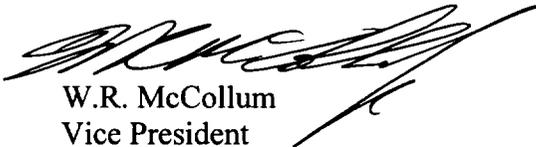
The successful performance in the other three force-on-force exercises, including an almost identical scenario in the same area, provided sufficient evidence of our capability to adequately defend vital targets.

SDD3

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Please note that specific information was omitted from this letter due to Safeguards Information concerns. The referenced document contains the specific details. Please contact Larry Nicholson at 864-885-3292 with any comments or questions regarding this letter.

Sincerely,



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