

April 20, 2001

MEMORANDUM TO: Chairman Meserve  
Commissioner Dicus  
Commissioner McGaffigan  
Commissioner Merrifield

FROM: Nils J. Diaz */RA/*

SUBJECT: COMNJD-01-0001 - POWER UPRATE APPLICATIONS

The United States of America is now in need of additional electricity supply. Additional electricity that does not impose demands on the strained gas systems or on the general energy infrastructure is particularly needed (this was brought out to me during every one of my recent Congressional visits).

I have just learned that 30 BWR reactor facilities are probably interested in applying for license amendments from the NRC to allow extended power uprate improvements (up to 20% additional power). The license amendments are supported by GE Topical Reports, some of which the NRC has already approved. Five of these amendment requests are, in fact, currently being reviewed by the NRC staff and five more applications are expected this year. Power uprates such as these for 30 BWRs could represent up to 6% of added electricity generation from nuclear power.

I am certain that the current applications are being, and will continue to be, reviewed with the highest standards of safety and that the staff is conducting these reviews in an expedient manner, consistent with available resources. I consider the relative importance of conducting effective and efficient NRC reviews of the many current and anticipated power uprate applications to be roughly comparable to the importance of license renewal reviews. Therefore, I recommend that activities related to power uprates and extended power uprates be assigned priority commensurate with the priority given to license renewal. Concurrently, the appropriate resources should be allocated to streamline the NRC power uprate review process to ensure that it is conducted in the most effective and efficient manner.

SECY: please track.

cc: EDO  
CFO  
SECY