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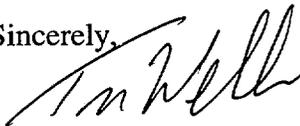
Ladies/Gentlemen:

DOCKETS 50-266 AND 50-301  
DEGRADED FIRE BARRIER  
POINT BEACH NUCLEAR PLANT, UNITS 1 AND 2

Enclosed is a special report for Point Beach Nuclear Plant (PBNP), Unit 1 and Unit 2. This report is provided in accordance with the PBNP Fire Protection Evaluation Report (FPER), Section 7.2.2.5. That section requires the submittal of a special report to the U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission when degradation of fire protection systems or components exceeds the time listed in FPER Section 7.2.2. Paragraph C.1.b(4) of that section requires this special report if an inoperable fire barrier will not be restored to an operable status within a seven day period. As discussed in the enclosure to this letter, we have discovered a degraded fire damper in the barrier that separates the 8'-0" elev. of the Primary Auxiliary Building from the 26'-0" elev. of the South Service Building. This barrier has been degraded for a period exceeding seven days and will continue to be degraded, with appropriate compensatory measures in place, until modifications are accomplished to correct the issue.

If you have any questions concerning our plans in this regard, please contact us.

Sincerely,



T. J. Webb  
Site Licensing Director

Enclosure

RLL/jlk

cc: NRC Resident Inspector  
NRC Regional Administrator

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## **Degradation of Fire Barrier Wall M-5-4-1**

This report is submitted in accordance with the PBNP Fire Protection Evaluation Report (FPER) Section 7.2.2.5, "Reportability," which requires a special report when specified fire protection features or equipment, including fire barriers and fire barrier components, are degraded or inoperable in excess of program requirements. As required by the FPER, this report includes a description of action(s) taken, or to be taken, the cause of the inoperability or degradation, and the plans for restoring the system to operable status.

### Description

The approved fire protection program described in the PBNP FPER, Section 7.2.2.1, "Applicability," specifies that fire protection components, which provide fire protection capability for equipment required for safe plant shutdown, shall be operable at all times when those systems are required to be operable. Fire barriers (Section 7.2.2.3.C) are included in the fire protection features identified in the FPER. PBNP Operations Manual procedure OM 3.27, "Control of Fire Protection and Appendix R Safe Shutdown Equipment," clarifies the requirement for fire barriers at Section 5.1.3. That procedure states that all fire barriers and fire barrier components (i.e. walls, floors and ceiling barriers, penetration seals, fire doors, fire dampers and electrical raceway fire barriers) protecting safe shutdown areas shall be operable. Contrary to these requirements we discovered on April 17, 2001 that the closer springs of fire damper M-5-4-1-G were cut and its curtain was fixed in an open position via screws, which effectively renders the damper not operable.

Our investigation of this condition has identified that during the conduct of modification MR 93-027 in September of 1994 the fire damper located in ceiling/floor penetration M-5-4-1-G was disabled. According to the information provided in the work plan the fire damper closer springs were cut and the damper curtain fixed open via screws. This penetration seal/fire damper assembly serves to separate the South Service Building (Fire Zone/Area 360/A01-E) from the 8' Primary Auxiliary Building (PAB) HVAC Equipment Room (Fire Zone/Area 159/A08). The PBNP Fire Hazard Analysis, Safe Shutdown Analysis, and prior NRC commitment require separation of these fire areas.

The disabled fire damper is located in the F-21 Chemistry Laboratory exhaust ductwork upstream of the W-27B fan. This exhaust ductwork exhausts into Stack Exhaust Fan Room (Fire Zone/Area 160/A09) where it is ultimately exhausted through the exhaust stack via fans W-21A/B.

### Actions Taken

In accordance with FPER 7.2.2.3.C.1.b and OM 3.27, Section 5.1.3, the following compensatory measures were initiated upon discovery of the condition and will be maintained in effect until resolution of this issue:

- An hourly fire watch inspection has been established on each side of the fire barrier in accordance with Section 8.0 of OM 3.27.

Remedy of this issue will be accomplished via a plant modification, MR 01-055, which has been initiated to restore or replace this fire damper. Because resolution of this barrier degradation will exist for greater than seven days, we are submitting this special report addressing this issue.

#### Plan and Schedule

Modification MR 01-055 has been initiated to remedy this issue. This modification will either restore this damper to its original condition or install a replacement fire damper with a rating commensurate with the fire rating of the barrier. A presentation on the necessity of this modification has been scheduled during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter of 2001. Upon completion of this presentation, design responsibility, budget, priority, and schedule will be established to ensure completion of the modification.

Installation of this modification will not require a plant outage because the only system affected will be the Chemistry Laboratory exhaust system. As resources allow, this modification will be conducted in accordance with the normal plant maintenance schedule.

Upon completion of our planning activities and determination of a completion date, we will notify the NRC by means of a supplement to this special report.