

November 15, 2002

Vanessa E. Quinn, Chief
Radiological Emergency Preparedness Branch
Technological Services Division
Federal Emergency Management Agency
500 C Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20472

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE TO EVALUATE ISSUES IDENTIFIED WITH
OYSTER CREEK'S PUBLIC ALERT AND NOTIFICATION SYSTEM

Dear Ms. Quinn:

We request the assistance of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to evaluate the impact of changes made to the Oyster Creek Site public alert and notification system identified by the NRC during inspection activities.

The licensee's siren program as approved by FEMA in 1987 included five sirens located on the southern tip of Long Beach Island a heavily populated tourist area in the summer. There is only one exit route off the island which is a bridge that leads into the 10 mile emergency planning zone (EPZ). These five sirens were in an area which is outside the 10 mile EPZ. These five sirens appear to have been removed from the siren program without an accompanying change to design bases documents and review by FEMA of the changes.

Also, there were eleven tone alert radios located in another area, within the 10 mile EPZ, where sirens did not reach the appropriate decibel level. Subsequently, the State purchased the homes in the area and removed them. The area is now supposedly uninhabited. The eleven tone alert radios have been removed from the public alert and notification system. Notification of this change in the siren program has not formally been made by the licensee.

Additionally, the original design basis document included 58 tone alert radios distributed to residences who requested them. The licensee has surveillance records for two years regarding the maintenance of these radios. In early 1990 the Salem/Hope Creek Site requested from FEMA permission to remove tone alert radios from the public alert and notification system for the Salem/Hope Creek Site. This was approved with the addition of more siren coverage for the Salem/Hope Creek Site. It appears the State assumed the approval to remove tone alert radios from the Salem/Hope Creek Site was "blanket" approval for the whole state. Subsequently, the Oyster Creek Site also removed the tone alert radios from their public alert and notification system. This change was made without notification by the licensee to the NRC or FEMA. No documentation was available at the time of the inspection to indicate that the licensee had reevaluated the siren system coverage to support the removal of the tone alert radios. Was the approval given to the Salem/Hope Creek Site considered blanket approval that would also be applicable at the Oyster Creek Site? Does the licensee for the Oyster Creek Site need to demonstrate that siren coverage is adequate without reliance on the 58 tone alert radios identified in the original design basis document? Another 20 tone alert radios were distributed in areas that probably were not within the 10 mile EPZ. These 20 radios were not included in the design basis documents. Is there any responsibility for the licensee to remain cognizant of these additional 20 tone alert radios?

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The NRC is in the process of assessing the significance of these findings. Particularly in regards to the requirements found in 10 CFR 50.47(b)(5) that means to provide early notification and clear instruction to the populace within the plume exposure pathway Emergency Planning Zone have been established. We ask that FEMA provide the NRC an assessment of the impact these changes have on the public alert and notification system for the Oyster Creek Site.

This matter has been discussed between our respective staff members, and a date of December 30, 2002, has been selected as a proposed goal for FEMA's response to this request for assistance. Please let us know if this date is not acceptable. Should you need any assistance with this matter please contact Mr. Daniel M. Barss of my staff at 301-415-2922.

Sincerely,

/RA/ by Randy Sullivan for:

Kathy Halvey Gibson, Chief
Emergency Preparedness and
Health Physics Section
Operator Licensing, Human Performance,
and Plant Support Branch
Division of Inspection Program Management
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

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