

January 10, 2005

Commissioner Bradley M. Campbell  
State of New Jersey  
Department of Environmental Protection  
P.O. Box 402  
Trenton, NJ 08625-0402

Dear Mr. Campbell:

I am responding to your letter of December 29, 2004, to Chairman Diaz, regarding the "B" reactor recirculation pump at the Hope Creek Generating Station (Hope Creek). In your letter, you stated your belief that Public Service Enterprise Group, Nuclear LLC (PSEG) should replace the shaft in the "B" recirculation pump prior to startup of the Hope Creek unit from the refueling outage.

The NRC staff has closely followed PSEG's efforts to address the issues associated with the "B" reactor recirculation pump. On December 17, 2004, members of the NRC Region I and Headquarters technical staffs met with PSEG in a public meeting to gather information and to ask questions about the recirculation pump and other related technical issues. The NRC has completed its review and issued a summary of the results in a letter dated January 10, 2005. The outcome of the review of the recirculation pump issues will be discussed at a public meeting scheduled for January 12, 2005.

The NRC is committed to ensuring the protection of public health and safety through oversight of the facilities that we regulate. NRC actions have been focused on ensuring safe operations at Hope Creek. Results of the NRC's review indicate that the licensee's proposal for continuously monitoring the Hope Creek recirculation pumps provides reasonable assurance that a potential crack in the recirculation pump shaft can be detected in time for operators to take appropriate actions to reduce the pump speed or remove the pump from service in order to prevent a complete shaft failure. The NRC intends to issue a Confirmatory Action Letter that will be used to formalize commitments made by PSEG to the NRC regarding implementation of a continuous monitoring program for the "B" recirculation pump, actions to be taken in the event of abnormal indications, and future repairs of the pump. Additionally, I want to assure you that we will continue to closely oversee PSEG's actions to address technical issues at Hope Creek, and will maintain openness for public involvement in the regulatory process. We plan to discuss the results of our reviews of the October 10, 2004, steam pipe break, the "B" reactor recirculation pump issues, and other technical issues at the public meeting on January 12, 2005. This meeting, along with issuing the preliminary results of the special inspection and summaries of NRC technical issue reviews, will provide an opportunity for the public to review the results of our assessments. If you have further questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

*/RA/*

J.E. Dyer, Director  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

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**/RA/**  
J.E. Dyer, Director  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

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