

From: Glenn Meyer
To: Walker, Tracy
Date: 3/26/04 11:32AM
Subject: Answers

As promised.

B-279

1. Your February 2004 letter to PSEG was very unusual. Why did the NRC feel it was necessary to initiate a workplace safety study?
- Ans. On January 28 the NRC issued a letter to PSEG (James Ferland, Chairman) requesting that PSEG perform an in-depth assessment of the work environments at the Salem and Hope Creek stations regarding the raising and addressing of safety issues. On February 27 PSEG provided a plan of action for the assessment, and on March 18 NRC held a public management meeting with PSEG to review their assessment plans and progress.
- The request was based on interim results from an ongoing NRC special review, which has included interviews of a wide range of Salem and Hope Creek personnel. Although there have been no serious safety violations thus far, the results have led to some concerns about the station work environment. NRC is concerned that if work environment issues are left unaddressed, an unacceptable, chilled environment could be created for raising and addressing safety issues and for making appropriate operational decisions .
- We have found no serious safety violations and have not concluded there has been a breakdown in the work environment. We are providing information at this time to enable the company to address potential issues before they become serious and impact on plant safety.
2. Some critics call Salem/Hope Creek the Davis-Besse of Region I. Are there similarities? Should these plants be shut down until the problems are resolved?
- Ans. The Salem and Hope Creek stations have operated with acceptable safety margins and have met all safety objectives. We have found no serious safety violations and have not concluded there has been a breakdown in the work environment. We have requested that PSEG assess the work environment at this time to enable the company to address potential issues before they become serious and impact on plant safety. This is the only area of similarity, in that potential issues if left unaddressed could potentially rise to the level experienced at Davis-Besse. Accordingly, based on the acceptable operation of Salem and Hope Creek, a shutdown would be inappropriate.