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AUTH.NAME AUTHOR AFFILIATION
MAYER,L.O. Northern States Power Co.
RECIP.NAME RECIPIENT AFFILIATION
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

SUBJECT: Submits evaluation of need for drywell fire detection sys required by NRC 790829 safety evaluation.Installation of fire detectors in drywell is not required.Detectors will not pick up incipient fires due to large amount of air movement.

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NORTHERN STATES POWER COMPANY

MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA 55401

February 29, 1980

Director
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation
U S Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, DC 20555

MONTICELLO NUCLEAR GENERATING PLANT
Docket No. 50-263 License No. DPR-22

Evaluation of Need for Drywell Fire Detection System Required by Fire Protection Safety Evaluation

Sections 3.2.1 (1) and 5.12.6 of the Monticello Fire Protection Safety Evaluation Report issued by the NRC staff on August 29, 1979, contain our commitment to evaluate the need for an early warning fire detection system in the drywell. The purpose of this letter is to supply the staff with the results of this evaluation.

The drywell is normally inerted with nitrogen whenever the reactor is in the run mode. Technical Specifications allow primary containment to be deinerted for a 24 hour period before and after a plant shutdown. Deinerting the drywell is only done when drywell entry is desired. Normally this is only done during refueling outages.

The evaluation of the need for fire detectors in the drywell was completed by the Bechtel Power Corporation. As a result of this evaluation, we do not believe that the installation of fire detectors in the drywell is required. The evaluation concluded that:

1. Fire detectors won't pick up incipient fires due to the large amount of air movement in this area.

2. There is a possibility that spurious fire detector actuation may be a problem during normal plant operation. This would subject the plant to unnecessary shutdowns to investigate potential fires.

3. Large fires in the drywell would be detectable by other means, i.e., containment pressure, temperature or equipment alarms.

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Control of fire hazards during periods of shutdown will be done in accordance with the plant's quality assurance program. Manual fire fighting capability for the drywell is provided by portable fire extinguishers and external hose stations.

This is in conformance with the requirements for operating plants with inerted containments as specified in Appendix A to Branch Technical Position APCSB 9.5-1, August 23, 1976, Revision. Please contact us if you require additional information related to this item.

L. O. Mayer

L O Mayer, PE
Manager of Nuclear Support Services

LOM/DMM/jh

cc J G Keppler
G Charnoff