

September 4, 2012

Bette Pierman, et al.
<mailto:bettebgv@yahoo.com>

Dear Ms. Pierman, et al.:

On behalf of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), I am responding to your letter dated June 14, 2012, which expressed your concern that the former NRC Chairman, Gregory Jaczko had not discussed the issue of leakage from the Palisades Nuclear Power Plant safety injection and refueling water (SIRW) tank during a meeting with you and other members of the public on May 25, 2012. At the time of the meeting, the NRC staff had evaluated the issue and determined that the SIRW tank leakage was not impacting public health and safety, or safe plant operation. An issue of this nature would not normally call for notification of the Commission.

Since the licensee's initial discovery of the SIRW tank leakage, the licensee has collected and measured the leakage. None of it was released to the environment. On May 25, 2012, the leakage rate was less than 20 gallons per day. Although the SIRW tank is not used for daily plant operations, the Palisades Plant is not allowed to operate without the tank being available. Therefore, the plant has to be shut down before the tank can be drained. The tank, which contains a minimum of 250,000 gallons, is a source of borated water for activities during refueling outages and supplies the Emergency Core Cooling Systems and the Containment Spray System during emergencies. With such a small leak, there was no risk of the plant not having enough water in the tank.

The NRC resident inspectors were monitoring the trend in tank leakage and the licensee's plans to deal with the leakage and plant operations if the leakage continued to increase. The licensee had established a leakage limit of 31 gallons per day, at which time the tank would have to be repaired. When this occurred on June 12, 2012, the licensee shut the plant down as planned. The NRC staff considered the SIRW tank issues as important and treated them as such, but because the staff observed that the tank leakage was not impacting public health and safety, or safe plant operation, the issues were not significant enough to warrant notification of the Commission.

Additionally, you raised the issue of the plant aging. Palisades received a renewed license in 2007. As part of its renewed license, the licensee must manage the effects of materials aging. The licensee previously committed to perform a one-time inspection of the SIRW tank to confirm its condition. This consisted of a visual internal inspection and in-service testing around the manway. The licensee is required to assess this current operating experience and make changes to the aging management program as appropriate. The NRC will inspect this plan once the licensee's evaluation is complete.

- 2 -

Please contact Thomas Taylor, Senior Resident Inspector at Palisades, at 269-764-8971, or Jack Giessner, Palisades Branch Chief, at 630-829-9608, if you have further questions.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Allison M. Macfarlane