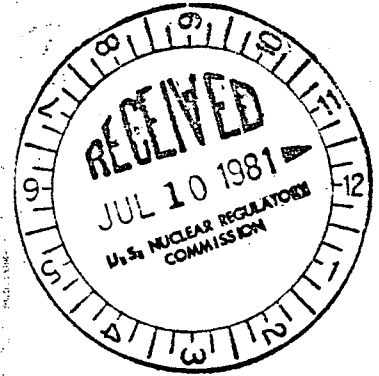




UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20555

JUL 07 1981



LS05-81-

LETTER TO ALL SEP LICENSEES

Gentlemen:

SUBJECT: SEP REDIRECTION

In a meeting with the SEP Owners Group on October 3, 1980 the NRC staff informed the licensee representatives of our intent to proceed with the SEP reviews using a "lead plant" approach. By this approach the staff would perform an independent review of each plant starting with Palisades using presently available information. Each topic evaluation issued would identify all deviations from current criteria and would recommend backfitting requirements to alleviate the significant problem areas. On November 3, 1980 another meeting was held between the licensee management and W. J. Dircks and other senior NRC staff. At that meeting, the licensees indicated some concern over the staff's proposed lead plant approach. During those discussions, the SEP owners proposed to commit additional resources, assume more review responsibility and use a topic-by-topic approach to complete their review of 60% of the SEP topics by June 1981.

Another Owners Group meeting was held on December 2, 1980 where the owners proposed a composite lead plant/topic-by-topic approach. In this approach a lead plant (or plants) would be selected for each of the SEP topics and the other licensees would perform topic assessments for their facilities using the lead topic safety evaluation report as a model. The Owners Group stated that this approach would result in their completion of sufficient topics to attain a 60% topic completion level by June 1981. By letter dated January 14, 1981 the staff agreed to proceed on a ninety day trial basis with the SEP redirection using the owners group proposed lead topic approach. At the end of that period the staff would evaluate the quality and the progress of the licensee topic safety assessments and decide whether to continue with the redirected program or to return to the lead plant approach.

Each of the licensees of the SEP responded by letter to the staff's January 14, 1981 letter by informing the staff of their commitment to complete 60% of the plant topic reviews by June 30, 1981. As of June 15, 1981, we received approximately 50 topic assessments from licensees. Less than one half are useful because of their poor quality. We have been informed that approximately 70 additional topic assessments are expected to be submitted by July 31, 1981 which will approximate the 60% SEP Owners Group commitment. However, based on the quality of the original licensee submittals, the staff is concerned that these latest assessments will be of acceptable quality.

*Add: D. Eisenhut - 1c4
G. Laines - 1c4*

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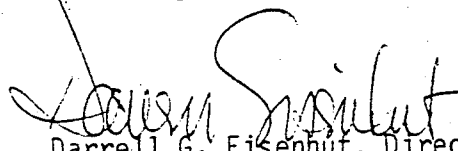
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Since we have not to date received a sufficient number of topic safety assessments to adequately judge the overall quality of the licensee performance, the staff will be deferring its final decision until after June 30, 1981. However, the present judgment by the staff is that during the SEP redirection trial period the SEP licensees have not met their commitment to perform acceptable topic safety assessments and to alleviate the backlog of topic safety evaluations. The staff believes that if the licensees are not able to commit the necessary resources to fully support the SEP lead topic approach we will have no choice when we complete our evaluation of the proposed redirection, but to return to our lead plant approach.

Therefore, we request that licensee and NRC management meet on July 15, 1981 in Bethesda. At that meeting, we will expect the owners to present positive indications of their commitment to provide sufficient resources to support their proposed SEP redirection approach and to complete SEP topic assessments in accordance with the schedules included as Enclosures 1 and 2. If we are satisfied that the owners are firmly committed and have taken positive steps to actively support the NRC's efforts toward the completion of the SEP, we will extend the trial redirection. If not, we will return to the lead plant approach.

Sincerely,



Darrell G. Eisenhut, Director
Division of Licensing
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Enclosures:
As stated

cc w/enclosures:
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