



**UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
REGION II**

245 PEACHTREE CENTER AVENUE NE, SUITE 1200
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30303-1257

February 18, 2016

EA-15-192

Mrs. Cheryl A. Gayheart, VP Nuclear Plant Site
Southern Nuclear Operating Co., Inc.
Joseph M. Farley Nuclear Plant
7388 North State Highway 95
Columbia, AL 36319

**SUBJECT: FARLEY NUCLEAR PLANT – CLOSURE OF NRC INVESTIGATION
OI CASE NO 2-2014-026**

Dear Mrs. Gayheart:

On August 26, 2015, the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission's (NRC) Office of Investigations (OI) completed an investigation to determine if two licensed senior reactor operators engaged in deliberate misconduct while evaluating the operability of degraded steam flow instruments. Based on information gathered during the OI investigation, and additional internal reviews, the NRC concluded that there was not sufficient evidence to substantiate that the operators engaged in deliberate misconduct. The underlying regulatory issue associated with the inoperability of the steam flow instruments was previously dispositioned by the NRC in accordance with the Reactor Oversight Process as a licensee-identified, non-cited violation of Unit 1 Technical Specification 3.3.2, "Engineered Safety Feature Actuation System (ESFAS) Instrumentation." (NRC Inspection Report 05000348/2014003 and 05000364/2014003 - ADAMS ML14212A417).

The NRC conducted this investigation because of the apparent delay in entering the operability determination process for degraded Unit 2 main steam flow instruments. Based on information gathered during OI interviews, a licensed senior reactor operator was concerned about the operability of the steam flow instruments. The information obtained during the investigation also indicated that this concern was a factor in the decision to not immediately enter the operability determination process for the remaining steam flow channels before the first inoperable Unit 2 channel had been restored to an operable status. While no Unit 2 Technical Specification violation occurred as a result of delayed entry into the operability determination process, this may not be the case in future situations when the operability of safety systems are challenged by the existence of degraded or non-conforming conditions. We are providing our perspective in this matter for your consideration in any possible corrective actions you may be taking. You are not required to respond to this letter.

**CERTIFIED MAIL NUMBER: 7012 3050 0001 9196 6628
RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED**

In accordance with Title 10 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* 2.390, "Public Inspections, Exemptions, Requests for Withholding," of the NRC's "Rules of Practice and Procedure," a copy of this letter and your response (if any) will be available electronically for public inspection in the NRC's Public Document Room or from the Publicly Available Records (PARS) component of NRC's Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS). ADAMS is accessible from the NRC website at <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html> (the Public Electronic Reading Room). To the extent possible, your response should not include any personal privacy or proprietary, information so that it can be made available to the Public without redaction.

This completes NRC's actions in this matter and the investigation is considered closed. If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Shane Sandal at (404) 997-4513 or by e-mail at shane.sandal@nrc.gov.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Mark Franke, Acting Director
Division of Reactor Projects

DISTRIBUTION:

David Gamberoni, Regional Enforcement Coordinator

Melanie Checkle, Regional Allegations Coordinator

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Linda Gibson, Allegations Assistant

C. Gayheart

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Sincerely,

/RA/

Mark Franke, Acting Director
Division of Reactor Projects

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David Gamberoni, Regional Enforcement Coordinator
Melanie Checkle, Regional Allegations Coordinator
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Linda Gibson, Allegations Assistant

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DATE	2/10/2016	2/11/2016	2/11/2016	2/18/2016		
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