

files

50-387

MAR 11 1983

William G. Brace
City Clerk
Office of City Clerk
City of Wilkes-Barre
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18711

Dear Mr. Brace:

Thank you for sending this office a copy of Resolution No. 36159. I apologize for the delay in responding. Your resolution expressed concern over a recent incident involving leakage of radioactive water at the Pennsylvania Power and Light Company's Susquehanna Steam Electric Station and requested the NRC to re-examine and formulate more stringent guidelines relative to nuclear power plant design and operation.

Although your resolution did not specify a particular incident at the station, a review of our records indicated that two inadvertent spills of radioactive water occurred within the plant recently. The spills, which occurred on January 7 and January 21, 1983, were safely channeled by floor drains to the plant's liquid radioactive waste system. In addition, on December 21, 1982, about 270 gallons of slightly radioactive liquid (sample analysis indicated no isotopic content in excess of 1% maximum permissible concentration, therefore, within NRC limits) were prematurely released via the normal station discharge path. While that release was labeled "unplanned", it should be noted that the liquid was destined for discharge, and had been sampled, but, due to operator error, was released prior to station shift supervision obtaining the sample analysis results.

With respect to the two spills in January, our review indicated that the liquid was collected and disposed of in accordance with plant design, and that corrective actions were taken to prevent recurrence. With respect to the "unplanned" release, that release resulted from inadequate control over liquid radwaste releases, and prompt action was taken by station management to correct the inadequacy which allowed the event to occur. Neither the spills nor the unplanned release posed a hazardous situation for area residents.

Our review of the three events has determined that existing NRC regulations for design and operation of nuclear power plants are adequate to protect public health and safety. But, be assured that NRC continually reviews power plant design and operation, as well as licensees' experiences during construction and operation of nuclear plants, to determine whether new or revised regulations need to be imposed.

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