

TS C3.

Distribution for EDO Principal Correspondence Control Ticket #G970174

DISTRIBUTION:

Docket Files (STN 50-456, STN 50-457, STN 50-454, STN 50-455, 50-237, 50-249, 50-373, 50-374, 50-254, 50-265, 50-295, 50-304) (w/incoming)

PUBLIC (w/incoming)

EDO #G970174

EDO r/f

L.J. Callan, 017G21

E. Jordan, 017G21

H. Thompson, 017G21

P. Norry, 017G21

J. Blaha, 017G21

S. Burns, 015B18

A.B. Beach, RIII

S. Collins/F. Miraglia, 012G18

R. Zimmerman, 012G18

T. Martin, 011H21

W. Travers, 014D4

PD3-2 r/f (w/incoming)

J. Roe

E. Adensam

R. Capra

A. Thadani, 012G18

M. Boyle (email MLB4)

P. Milano

OGC, 015B18

OPA

OCA, 017

SECY #CRC-97-0234

NRR Mail Room (EDO #G970174 w/incoming), 012G18

N. Olson, 012G18

T. Harris

D. Skay (w/incoming)

C. Moore

R. Lanksbury, RIII

M. Dapas, RIII

P. Hiland, RIII

4704040205 3pp.

50-237



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

April 1, 1997

The Honorable Carol Moseley-Braun
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510-1303

Dear Senator Moseley-Braun:

I am responding to the letter you sent Dennis Rathbun March 10, 1997, asking that the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) address concerns raised by one of your constituents, Mr. George Black, on February 20, 1997. Mr. Black asked you to encourage the NRC to enforce its safety regulations in relation to Commonwealth Edison Company's (ComEd) nuclear plants.

Performance of ComEd plants has been of concern to the NRC for some time, and three plants in particular, Dresden, LaSalle, and Zion, are currently receiving significant NRC oversight. These three plants are on the NRC's "watch list" of plants that warrant increased NRC attention from both the Headquarters office and the Regional office (LaSalle and Zion were placed on the watch list in January 1997 and Dresden has been on the list since January 1992). The increased attention consists of additional inspections, increased monitoring of licensee performance, management meetings between licensee and NRC management, and site visits by senior NRC management. These plants will remain on the list until they have demonstrated consistently improved safety performance.

Because Dresden had been on the watch list since 1992, the NRC conducted an independent safety inspection (ISI) in 1996 to determine whether ComEd was sufficiently improving the overall safety performance. The team found that improvements had been made in all areas inspected, but identified some significant weaknesses in the accessibility and maintenance of design information and engineering activities. The NRC issued a confirmatory action letter on November 21, 1996, to confirm the actions ComEd is taking to address these deficiencies. Both units at Dresden are currently operating, following a number of extended maintenance outages to correct material condition problems.

LaSalle is currently in an extended shutdown, due in part to findings by the NRC and an external review group commissioned by ComEd. ComEd has developed a restart action plan to address and correct identified weaknesses. No date has been announced for restarting either of the units. Zion remains shut down since an incident on February 21, 1997, which involved inappropriate operator actions during shutdown of the facility. The NRC sent an augmented inspection team (AIT) to evaluate the event. On the basis of the AIT's conclusions and ComEd's assessment of the event, Zion will remain shut down until the performance problems are satisfactorily addressed. On February 25, 1997, the NRC issued a confirmatory action letter to ComEd which requires that, before restarting Zion, it (1) discuss with the NRC the findings of its investigation of the event and (2) detail the corrective actions taken. The NRC has formed joint regional and Headquarters plant performance review panels for both LaSalle and Zion; these panels hold monthly public meetings with ComEd to discuss performance improvement.

NRC FILE CENTER COPY

080037

1/1 JF21

In addition, as a result of continuing inconsistent performance at the ComEd sites, the NRC sent a letter to ComEd on January 27, 1997, requiring ComEd to submit information regarding its ability to safely operate its six nuclear stations while sustaining performance improvement at each site. ComEd's response was received on March 29, 1997. If the NRC staff determines that the information submitted does not ensure that ComEd can operate all six stations safely, NRC could take such actions as modifying, suspending, or revoking the operating license for one or more plants. Such significant action indicates the concern that the NRC has in ensuring that these plants are operated safely. A public meeting between ComEd and the Commission to discuss ComEd's response to the NRC's letter of January 27, 1997, is scheduled for April 25, 1997. For your information, I am enclosing a copy of that letter, as well as the letter informing ComEd of the results of the January 1997 senior management meeting.

The extra scrutiny that the ComEd plants are receiving is in addition to the routine inspections at each site, such as daily observations by the NRC resident inspectors assigned at each plant. Any violations of NRC regulations are addressed in the inspection reports and require a written response from the licensee. The NRC ensures that appropriate corrective actions are taken before closing out each violation.

Considering the increased attention to the ComEd sites, especially to Dresden, LaSalle, and Zion, I am confident that these facilities will continue to receive sufficient NRC inspection and oversight. I assure you that the NRC has enforced, and will continue to enforce, its regulations at the ComEd sites. I appreciate your constituent's interest and trust this response addresses his concerns.

Sincerely,

Original signed by

L. Joseph Callan

L. Joseph Callan
Executive Director
for Operations

Docket Nos. STN 50-456, STN 50-547,
STN 50-454, STN 50-455, 50-237,
50-249, 50-373, 50-374, 50-254,
50-265, 50-295, 50-304

Enclosures: Letters from H. Thompson, NRC, to
J. O'Connor, ComEd, dtd 01/27/97

G:\CMNTJR\SKAY\G970174.LTR

*see previous page for concurrence

**concurrence by telephone

To receive a copy of this document, indicate in the box: "C" = Copy without enclosures "E" = Copy with enclosures "N" = No copy

OFFICE	PM:PDIII-2	TECH ED	N	RIII	D:DRPW
NAME	DSKAY*	RSANDERS*	JGROBE**	JROE*	
DATE	03/25/97	03/20/97	03/24/97	03/25/97	
OFFICE	NRR:ADPR	NRR:D	EDO	OCA	
NAME	RZIMMERMAN*	SCOLLINS*	LJCALLAN*		
DATE	03/25/97	03/25/97	03/27/97	04/1/97	

OFFICIAL RECORD COPY