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OFFICE OF THE
CHAIRMAN

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

July 13, 1983

The Honorable James Weaver, Chairman
Subcommittee on Mining, Forest Management
and Bonneville Power Administration
Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This is in response to your letter to me of June 22, 1983, in which you asked several questions regarding the NRC's recent Construction Appraisal Team (CAT) inspection at the Washington Public Power Supply System's (WPPSS) Washington Nuclear Project No. 2 (WNP-2).

The CAT is a quality assurance assessment employed by the NRC to focus expert and specialized inspection attention on construction activities conducted by the holder of an NRC construction permit and its contractors, consultants and suppliers. The team typically includes 10 to 12 persons, including NRC, as well as consultant personnel, with expert knowledge of quality assurance, civil/structural, mechanical, electrical/instrumentation systems, welding/nondestructive examination, and procurement/materials control relating to the construction of nuclear power reactor facilities. The principal purpose of CAT inspections, which are under the direction of the NRC's Office of Inspection and Enforcement, is to evaluate the controls used to ensure that ongoing construction work and as-built conditions of the nuclear facility are in accordance with the design basis.

At the request of John B. Martin, Region V Administrator, the Office of Inspection and Enforcement finalized plans in early April, 1983 for the conduct of a CAT inspection at the WNP-2 construction site. The inspection was conducted during the period of May 17 through June 22, 1983.

The decision to conduct a CAT inspection at the WNP-2 site was based upon a determination by the management of Region V and the Office of Inspection and Enforcement that in light of previous construction problems, particularly those in the 1979-80 time period, such an inspection effort was desirable to provide an additional independent assessment of the adequacy of construction of the WNP-2 facility and the current quality assurance programs of WPPSS and its contractors. Enforcement action by the NRC in June 1980 included the imposition of civil penalties in the amount of \$60,000 and a separate requirement that WPPSS submit to NRC information on steps they would take to provide assurance of the quality of structures, components and systems constructed by their contractors. This action resulted in the suspension by WPPSS of essentially all construction activities at the site for several months. In response to this enforcement action by the NRC, WPPSS initiated

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The Honorable James Weaver

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comprehensive programs to upgrade the quality assurance programs of site contractors to allow the restart of construction activities and to verify the quality of construction previously completed. Both of these actions by the NRC were documented in letters to WPPSS on June 17, 1980 which were placed in the NRC's public document room.

Although a press release was issued by the NRC at the time of the enforcement action in June 1980, no specific provision was provided for public comment. In conformance with our standard inspection practice there was no public notice prior to the recent CAT inspection, although Region V has responded to media inquiries following the inspection.

The written report of the CAT inspection is expected to be completed by the Office of Inspection and Enforcement in early August. Until we assess the response by WPPSS and their plans to deal with the CAT inspection findings, we are unable to assess the effect the findings will have on the fuel loading schedule or the NRC's issuance of an operating license.

I trust the above information is responsive to your questions. I would be pleased to provide any additional information relating to this matter which you may find necessary.

Sincerely,



Nunzio J. Palladino
Chairman



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