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PARRISH,J.V. Washington Public Power Supply System

SUBJECT: Forwards insp rept 50-397/98-16 on 980619-0708.No violations noted.

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UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
REGION IV
611 RYAN PLAZA DRIVE, SUITE 400
ARLINGTON, TEXAS 76011-8064

July 16, 1998

Mr. J. V. Parrish (Mail Drop 1023)
Chief Executive Officer
Washington Public Power Supply System
P.O. Box 968
Richland, Washington 99352-0968

SUBJECT: NRC AUGMENTED INSPECTION OF WNP-2 (NRC INSPECTION REPORT 50-397/98-16)

Dear Mr. Parrish:

This refers to the Augmented Inspection Team activity conducted by Mr. J. Shackelford and other members of the NRC staff during the period of June 19 through July 8, 1998. The team examined the facts surrounding an event at the WNP-2 facility on June 17, 1998, involving a rupture of the plant fire protection system due to water hammer. This rupture resulted in plant flooding, which submerged and rendered one train of your low pressure emergency core cooling system inoperable and significantly affected equipment in the other redundant division. At the conclusion of the inspection, a meeting was held to discuss the team's findings. That meeting was open to observation by members of the public and was attended by those members of your staff identified in the enclosed inspection report. The charter for this augmented inspection is also included in the enclosed inspection report.

Since there was no fire and the reactor had been shutdown for an extended period, the event did not pose a risk to the public health and the actual safety consequences were minimal. However, with respect to potential safety significance and consequences, the team concluded that the event was important. The rupture of the fire protection system and the subsequent flooding and loss-of-equipment function in two safety-related pump rooms suggests that deficiencies may exist in system design, operation, maintenance, and personnel practices. Specifically, the event appears to have been preventable in that the actuation of the fire main preaction system, which contributed to the water hammer, was caused by a maintenance activity and could have been avoided. Evidence also exists that the fire main system may have been known to be susceptible to water hammer events and corrective actions have not precluded the recurrence of this phenomenon. Further, the extent of the flooding caused by the fire main rupture was significantly increased by a watertight door left in an unsecured condition and was further complicated by the failure of a sump isolation valve, which was known by your staff to be in a degraded condition prior to the event. Additionally, on the basis of the failures which occurred, and the fact that this event had a significant impact on safety-related equipment powered from two separate divisions, this event calls into question the adequacy of the design of your fire protection system and plant features to ensure protection against flooding.

Notwithstanding, the NRC's view that this was a significant event, we recognize that plant operators took timely and decisive actions to isolate the flood source, activate the emergency response organization, and to notify the appropriate authorities. Your staff also took reasonable actions to ensure that qualified personnel were available who were capable of responding to the informational and technical needs of the control room staff, the NRC, and the State of Washington. Additionally, we recognize that the reactor was in a shutdown condition at the time of the event and was maintained in a safe configuration throughout the event. Further, we acknowledge that you have already taken short-term corrective actions or implemented interim compensatory measures to address the more significant deficiencies, which have been identified. These short-term corrective actions and interim compensatory measures were discussed with your staff at a public meeting with the NRC on July 2, 1998, and again during the Augmented Inspection Team exit meeting, which was held on July 8, 1998. The NRC's inspection of these issues will be documented in a separate NRC inspection report.

The scope and charter of the Augmented Inspection Team did not include provisions for, or require the team to identify any violations of regulatory requirements. The NRC will conduct future inspections and evaluations to ensure all of the relevant issues raised by this event are properly dispositioned. Accordingly, any potential enforcement issues, which may be associated with this event, will be addressed in future correspondence.

A copy of this letter and the enclosure will be placed in the NRC Public Document Room.

Should you have any questions concerning this inspection, we will be pleased to discuss them with you.

Sincerely,

Ellis W. Merschoff
Regional Administrator

Docket No.: 50-397
License No.: NPF-21

Enclosure:
NRC Inspection Report
50-397/98-16

cc w/enclosure:
Chairman
Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council
P.O. Box 43172
Olympia, Washington 98504-3172

Mr. Rodney L. Webring (Mail Drop PE08)
Vice President, Operations Support/PIO
Washington Public Power Supply System
P.O. Box 968
Richland, Washington 99352-0968

Mr. Greg O. Smith (Mail Drop 927M)
WNP-2 Plant General Manager
Washington Public Power Supply System
P.O. Box 968
Richland, Washington 99352-0968

Mr. D. W. Coleman (Mail Drop PE20)
Manager, Regulatory Affairs
Washington Public Power Supply System
P.O. Box 968
Richland, Washington 99352-0968

Mr. Albert E. Mouncer (Mail Drop 396)
Chief Counsel
Washington Public Power Supply System
P.O. Box 968
Richland, Washington 99352-0968

Mr. Paul Inserra (Mail Drop PE20)
Manager, Licensing
Washington Public Power Supply System
P.O. Box 968
Richland, Washington 99352-0968

Perry D. Robinson, Esq.
Winston & Strawn
1400 L Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20005-3502

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