



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

September 26, 1988

The Honorable Lawton Chiles
United States Senator
Federal Building
Lakeland, Florida . 33801

Dear Senator Chiles:

I am pleased to respond to your letter of September 2, 1988, in which you indicated that one of your constituents, Dory Auerbach, expressed concern regarding operations at the Turkey Point power plant. The Auerbach letter to you of August 25, 1988, also enclosed an article from The Miami News, dated August 16, 1988, relating to a spill of radioactive water at the plant. The concern raised by Dory Auerbach is that the plant has not operated well for many years; evidence cited comes from the newspaper article and includes fines imposed on Turkey Point for violating NRC regulations, an NRC report that commented on an Independent Management Appraisal of Florida Power & Light Co. (FPL), and the spill of radioactive water on August 16, 1988.

The concern over Turkey Point's operation is understandable. The information presented in the newspaper article, which appears to be the basis for Dory Auerbach's comments, is generally accurate. The operation at the facility has not been good in the past. NRC recognized this in the early 1980's and stepped up its inspection and oversight activities, which resulted in several fines, a series of Orders requiring improvements, and a number of meetings with the licensee. NRC monitoring of the site was increased by assigning more inspectors and paying special attention to the operating data from the plant. In early 1984, the licensee, Florida Power and Light, committed to a major improvement effort called the Performance Enhancement Program (PEP). Since that time, FPL has spent several hundred million dollars to improve plant equipment. The improvements already implemented include:

- (1) addition of a training facility that includes a control room simulator
- (2) addition of a health physics facility
- (3) addition of an administration building
- (4) addition of a nuclear maintenance facility
- (5) numerous walkdown inspections of equipment and piping
- (6) a significant staffing increase at the Turkey Point site

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- (7) replacement of steam generators
- (8) an overhaul of plant procedures
- (9) addition of two emergency feedwater pumps
- (10) addition of five backup diesel generators
- (11) a number of programs to improve the plant design and equipment surveillances

In addition, FPL is now in the process of upgrading the emergency electric power supplies at the plant and is adding two large safety-related diesel generators at a cost estimated to exceed \$80 million.

Although major improvements were and are being made at the plant, it has been apparent the last few years that further improvements were needed, especially in the areas of management and operations. This need was indicated by numerous citations by NRC for failure to follow procedures, operational errors by plant personnel, and a less than aggressive maintenance effort. An independent appraisal of FPL management was undertaken early this year as required by the NRC Confirmatory Order of October 19, 1987. NRC's evaluation of that appraisal and the FPL response to it are described in the earlier referenced newspaper article.

In the past year, FPL has made widespread management changes at the Turkey Point site and, more recently, at corporate headquarters. New, experienced personnel have been placed in key positions, including a Senior Vice President in charge of all nuclear activities, a corporate Vice President in charge of nuclear engineering, a Site Vice President responsible for Turkey Point operation, a Turkey Point Plant Manager, and a Turkey Point Operations Superintendent. Many other management changes have also been made.

There are signs that the improvements in plant equipment, licensee management, and engineering programs are beginning to have an effect. The plant operational experience in 1988 has been better than in any year of recent memory. The indications of this upturn include fewer citations by NRC, only one fine in February 1988 for a violation that occurred in 1987, fewer (required) event reports, a plant record for continuous operation without a forced outage, and a noticeably different attitude among management and staff. It is too soon to conclude that Turkey Point has improved its performance in a permanent and lasting way. However, if the current trend continues for another year, it should be noticeable to your constituents. NRC plans to continue its high level of staff and management attention to this plant until it is convinced that the improvements are permanent.

The Honorable Lawton Chiles

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September 12, 1988

The recent spill of slightly radioactive water from a storage pool for used fuel was an unfortunate occurrence that received a great deal of media attention but that has little significance for public safety or as an indication of the plant's operational performance. I am enclosing a summary of the events surrounding that spill for your information.

Sincerely,

Original signed by
Victor Stello

Victor Stello, Jr.
Executive Director
for Operations

Enclosure:
As stated

Distribution:

Docket File (50-251)
NRC PDR w/incoming
Local PDR w/incoming
EDO #0003940
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*SEE PREVIOUS CONCURRENCE

*LA:PD22:DRPR:NRR
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JMSniezek
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Tech Ed.
B. Culture
09/16/88

ED:NRR
TMurley
09/19/88

*ADR2:DRPR:NRR
GCLainas
09/ /88

EDO
VStello
09/19/88

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The Honorable Lawton Chiles

- 2 -

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GEEEdison
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DMCrutchfield
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HNEerlow
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Tech Ed.
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D:NRR
TEMurley
09/ /88

ADR2:DRPR:NRR
GCLainas
09/15/88

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VStello
09/ /88

ENCLOSURE

SUMMARY OF EVENTS

TURKEY POINT UNIT 4

Early in the morning on August 16, 1988, a spent fuel pit pump failed. About 3,200 gallons of slightly radioactive water from the spent fuel pool leaked out of the pump onto the floor of the pump room in the auxiliary building. The water had a radiation level of 5 mr/hr at contact. About 700 gallons of the water remained in the pump room. Of the remaining 2,500 gallons, the licensee has determined that about 1,000 gallons flowed down the pump room drains into the waste holdup tank. The rest of the water flowed outside the building into the adjacent yard area (within the Radiation Control Area). The licensee has estimated that about 6 or 7 gallons flowed down an outside storm drain and into the intake of the plant cooling canal. The canal is a very large, closed loop, onsite flow path used to cool the plant's heat loads. Radiation levels were well below 10 CFR 20 limits. The licensee formed an event response team, declared an unusual event, and notified the State.

All spent fuel in the pool was at least two years old. The pool temperature was measured at 94°F and constant, even with no pumps running. A second spent fuel cooling pump had been removed from service for electric power supply modifications. A third pump, an emergency backup pump, had burned out a motor four days earlier. The second and third pumps were both made operational later that day.

The area was quickly cleaned up. The shoes and clothing of 14 plant workers were slightly contaminated from working around the water. There has been heavy media interest, both local and national. There was no radiation release offsite, and the safety significance of the event appears to be very low.



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

EDO Principal Correspondence Control

FROM:

DUE: 09/22/88

EDO CONTROL: 0003940

DOC DT: 09/02/88

FINAL REPLY:

Sen. Lawton Chiles

TO:

Carlton Kammerer

FOR SIGNATURE OF:

** GRN **

CRC NO: 88-0798

Executive Director

DESC:

ROUTING:

ENCLOSES LETTER FROM DORY AUERBACH CONCERNING
FLORIDA POWER & LIGHT CO.

Lieberman
Grace

DATE: 09/08/88

ASSIGNED TO:

CONTACT:

NRR

Murley

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS OR REMARKS:

NRR RECEIVED: SEPTEMBER 8, 1988

ACTION: DRPR:VARGA

NRR ROUTING: MURLEY/SNIEZEK

CRUTCHFIELD

MIRAGLIA

GILLESPIE

MOSSBURG

ACTION

DUE TO NRR DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

BY *September 19, 1988*

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
CORRESPONDENCE CONTROL TICKET

PAPER NUMBER: CRC-88-0798 LOGGING DATE: Sep 7 88
ACTION OFFICE: EDO
AUTHOR: L. Chilkes--Const Ref
AFFILIATION: UNITED STATES SENATE
LETTER DATE: Sep 2 88 FILE CODE: ID&R-5 FPL
SUBJECT: Florida Power & Light Company
ACTION: Direct Reply
DISTRIBUTION: OCA to Ack, Docket
SPECIAL HANDLING: None
NOTES: Dory Auerbach
DATE DUE: Sep 20 88
SIGNATURE: DATE SIGNED:
AFFILIATION:

Rec'd Off. EDO

Date 9-8-88

Time 6:45

EDO---003940