



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

FEB 13 1990

Ms. Ada Bernstein
5041 Pine Drive
Boynton Beach, Florida 33437

Dear Ms. Bernstein:

On December 20, 1989, you wrote to Congressman Harry Johnston about your concern that the Turkey Point nuclear plant poses a danger, and you requested his support in closing the plant. Congressman Johnston forwarded your letter to the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) for a response, and I am replying to the issue you raised.

With respect to the safety of the Turkey Point plant, the plant has had its share of operating problems in the past, and concern over Turkey Point's operation is understandable. 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 increased its monitoring of the site by assigning a third resident inspector and by special attention to the operating data from the plant. In early 1984, the licensee, Florida Power and Light Company (FPL), committed to a major improvement effort in the Performance Enhancement Program (PEP). Since that time, FPL has spent several hundred million dollars to improve plant equipment. In addition, FPL is now in the process of upgrading the emergency electric power supplies at the plant and will be adding two large safety-related diesel generators.

Although major improvements were and are being made at the plant, it became apparent during the last few years that further improvements were needed, especially in the areas of management and operations. This need was indicated by numerous NRC citations for failure to follow procedures, operational errors by plant personnel, and a less than aggressive maintenance effort. Beginning in 1987, FPL made widespread management changes at the Turkey Point site and at corporate headquarters. New, experienced personnel have been placed in key positions.

On June 1, 1989, the NRC staff briefed the Commission on the performance of selected nuclear power plants. Turkey Point was again singled out for close monitoring. During the discussion it was apparent that the Commission and the staff were troubled by the inability of the licensee to achieve sustained good performance at Turkey Point.

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However, there recently have been strong indications that the improvements in plant equipment, licensee management, and engineering programs are beginning to have a positive effect. The plant operational experience in 1988 was better than in any year to date. In addition, the latest NRC Systematic Assessment of Licensee Performance (SALP), which was issued on October 19, 1989, indicates that Turkey Point has operated with an improved level of performance. The staff's SALP is an integrated Agency effort to evaluate a licensee's performance. A copy of the Turkey Point SALP is enclosed for your information. The staff will maintain its high level of attention to this plant until we are certain that the improvements are permanent.

In conclusion, the NRC believes that the Turkey Point plant is being operated safely and that closing the plant, as you suggested, is not warranted. I hope that this letter adequately addresses your concern.

Sincerely,

[Original signed by Frank Gillespie]

(for) Thomas E. Murley, Director
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Enclosure:
SALP Report

cc w/enclosure:
The Honorable Harry Johnston
United States House of
Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Sent 2/12
*See previous for concurrence

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