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TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY

CHATTANOOGA, TENNESSEE 37401

400 Chestnut Street Tower II

9 OCT 11 A 8:41
October 5, 1979

Mr. James P. O'Reilly, Director
Office of Inspection and Enforcement
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Region II - Suite 3100
101 Marietta Street
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

Dear Mr. O'Reilly:

The following information is being supplied to address an open item for the Browns Ferry Nuclear Plant identified in the March 22, 1979, inspection report, RII:RFS 50-259/79-4, 50-260/79-4, and 50-296/79-4. This item, No. 50-259/79-04-02, referred to the yard unwatering system at Browns Ferry.

The level of ground water at the Browns Ferry site is controlled by two unwatering pumps exterior to the plant. In January 1979, both pumps became inoperable at the same time; and the resulting rise in ground-water level caused some seepage into the basements of the turbine and reactor buildings. The rate of inleakage did not jeopardize any safety-related equipment, but did raise some concerns about the design and reliability of the unwatering system.

As a result of the above occurrence, TVA is following two parallel courses of action to resolve concerns in this matter. First, TVA is improving the reliability of the unwatering system by constructing two additional wells to provide a total of three functional wells (one of the previous wells is irreparable). Two of these wells will contain electric motor-driven pumps, one of which can also be operated by a diesel engine; and the third well will be fitted for the rapid installation of portable, medium-capacity, submersible pumps. These actions are in progress and should be completed in the spring of 1980. Secondly, TVA is investigating the source of groundwater and analyzing the possible effects of inleakage into the reactor building, particularly in the event of the probable maximum flood. This study, which includes drilling several test wells, should also be completed in the spring of 1980.

We will continue to keep you informed of our progress on this issue. If you have any questions, please call Tish Jenkins at FTS 854-2014.

Very truly yours,

TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY

L. M. Mills
L. M. Mills, Manager
Nuclear Regulation and Safety

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