

JUL 01 1983

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50-311

The Honorable Michael N. Castle
Lieutenant Governor of Delaware
Dover, Delaware 19901

Dear Mr. Castle:

I am pleased to respond to your letter of June 1, 1983, to Chairman Palladino in which you expressed concerns regarding the NRC's decision to permit the Salem nuclear plants to continue operation in light of the serious incidents which occurred at Salem Unit 1 in February 1983. You also requested that the NRC give closer scrutiny to the operations of the Salem plants in the future.

First of all, I want to note that senior staff and managers from the Region I Office met with the Delaware Authority on Radiation Protection at their regular meeting on May 11, 1983, and briefed them on the Salem events as well as NRC's actions taken as a result of the events. A representative of the Delaware Attorney General's Office was also a participant. This meeting was noted to be beneficial to both parties. We have kept and will continue to keep the State of Delaware informed of matters affecting Salem. Our contact is the Governor's designated State Liaison Officer, Dr. Harry W. Otto of the Department of Natural Resources - Environmental Control.

While we share your concerns, we believe the Salem plants can be operated safely. Prior to permitting continued operation, the NRC reviewed in great detail all circumstances surrounding the February failures of the Unit 1 automatic reactor trip systems. Short and long term plans to address all deficiencies were developed. All short term actions concerning Unit 1 have been completed and those short term actions concerning Unit 2 are required to be completed prior to Unit 2 startup. Additionally, the scope of the utility's and our review was expanded to determine whether the problems that were associated with the faulty reactor trip breaker components existed with other safety related equipment. Our conclusion was that similar problems did not exist with other safety related equipment. The NRC's decision to permit continued operation of the Salem units was based on the above conclusion as well as correction of the specific deficiencies identified from the events and the licensee's commitment to complete longer term actions.

These longer term actions involve, among other things, evaluations of the licensee's management organization, programs and practices by outside consultants, implementation of corrective action programs addressing weaknesses identified from these evaluations, and establishment of additional safety review organizations within the company. As part of NRC's followup of the Salem events, the NRC staff has instituted an augmented inspection program at Salem to enable closer monitoring of Salem activities. This program is being

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Michael N. Castle

carried out by two NRC resident inspectors who are assigned to the Salem site, with the assistance of additional inspectors from the NRC Region I office in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania. Additionally, senior utility and NRC management are meeting on a frequent (bimonthly) basis to review progress toward the completion and effectiveness of the longer term actions.

In summary, we believe that extensive corrective actions have been formulated and are being implemented, the licensee has been responsive, and we will closely monitor the licensee as these actions are completed.

Sincerely

(Signed) William J. Dircks

William J. Dircks
Executive Director
for Operations

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