



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS

Rhode Island Atomic Energy Commission
NUCLEAR SCIENCE CENTER
South Ferry Road
Narragansett, R. I. 02882

September 4, 1979

U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
631 Park Avenue
King of Prussia, Pennsylvania 19406

Gentlemen: Ref: Docket 50-193
 License R-95

The technical specifications (Section K.3.b.(2)(b)) require that the auxiliary electrical power system be retested at least weekly.

On Thursday, August 30, 1979, during a routine test, the generator did not start. During the preceding test on August 23, 1979 no problems were encountered. Using a battery charger and jumper leads to a nearby automobile battery, the generator started. After charging the battery, the generator was started several times. The difficulty was clearly a weak battery.

The battery was purchased & installed in late April 1979. Based on the manufacturers specifications, it was thought to be permanently "sealed", requiring no maintenance. For this reason, routine readings of specific gravity were not made. Such readings would have detected the weakening of the battery before failure and would have prevented the starting failure.

To minimize the chance of a recurrence the "seal" on the battery has been removed gaining access to the individual cells and the operators have been reminded that specific gravity determinations must be made weekly.

Very truly yours,

A. Francis DiMeglio
Director

AFD:ag

cc: Reactor Utilization Committee
RIAEC Commissioners
Licensed Operators

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