



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

2MM CORR

August 13, 1979

The Honorable Lee Sherman Dreyfus
Governor of Wisconsin
Madison, Wisconsin 53702

Dear Governor Dreyfus:

I am pleased to respond to your letter of May 24, 1979 regarding your recommendations that, based on lessons learned from the recent Three Mile Island Unit 2 (TMI-2) incident, a federal official be stationed onsite full-time with full authority to shut down a nuclear power plant in situations involving public safety.

In May 1977, the Commission considered various alternatives for inspecting operating reactors. Enclosed is a copy of the paper which presented a detailed analysis of these alternatives. The Commission decided to adopt a revised inspection program that, when fully implemented, will include assignment of resident inspectors to each operating power reactor site, selected fuel facilities and power reactor sites in later stages of construction. At the end of FY 1978, there were 22 resident inspectors assigned to 15 operating reactor sites, 5 construction sites and 2 fuel facilities. By October 1, 1979, we expect to have 49 resident inspectors assigned. Full implementation of the present program is anticipated by FY 1981 with 87 sites manned by NRC inspectors.

Implementation of the revised inspection program is proceeding rapidly. The program of assigning resident inspectors has been paced principally by the necessity of assuring that assigned inspectors are fully qualified. Unfortunately, the lengthy recruitment and training lead time and the limited availability of qualified personnel (coupled with the need to maintain an effective region-based inspection program) make it extremely difficult to implement the program any earlier. Resident inspectors, for the first two years of implementation (FY 1978 and FY 1979) have and will, for the most part, come from personnel already "on-board" before the resident program was approved. In September of 1978, the Commission was given additional manpower which has allowed us to recruit and begin training more inspectors for assignment to sites in FY 1980 and FY 1981.

The number of nuclear power plant units at a site and the plant's operating history are primary factors in establishing priority for assignment of resident inspectors to a site. For the operating plants in your State, resident inspectors are expected to be assigned to Point Beach Units 1 and 2 in mid-FY 1980 and for Kewaunee and LaCrosse, in late FY 1980.

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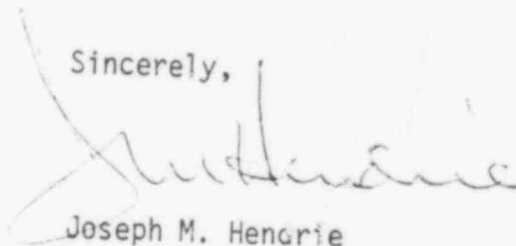
We believe that our ongoing expansion effort will improve the inspection program by increasing onsite inspector presence and capabilities for performing independent verification while continuing to adequately provide for fulfillment of NRC responsibilities with respect to the audit and inspection of nuclear power plants.

Facility licenses contain Technical Specifications which provide detailed requirements for conditions which must be satisfied for beginning or continuing reactor operation. Accordingly, conditions which require reactor shutdown have, for the most part, been identified in advance and prescribed to licensee personnel. Many of the conditions cause automatic shutdown; that is, no human action is necessary. For any condition discovered by an inspector where a needed manual shutdown has not been initiated, discussion by the inspector with plant management has always resulted in prompt licensee action. If a legally binding order to action is needed, it may be initiated promptly by a telephone call from the inspector to his Regional Office. Consequently, we have not found it necessary to delegate legal shutdown authority to the inspector.

We have initiated longer-term studies to assess the lessons learned from the TMI-2 accident and to identify any indicated changes in NRC licensing requirements and to the licensing process itself. In order to provide in-depth consideration of your recommendations, your letter has been forwarded to the appropriate study groups for their consideration.

I would like to assure you that we are making our best effort to evaluate and consider all recommendations for changes to the regulatory process that may enhance the safety of nuclear facility operations. I trust this is responsive to your concerns.

Sincerely,



Joseph M. Henrie

Enclosure:
"NRC Inspection Alternatives" -
SECY-77-138A

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