



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

September 19, 1989

The Honorable Lloyd Bentsen
United States Senator
961 Federal Bulding
Austin, Texas 78701

Dear Senator Bentsen:

This responds to your letter of August 21, 1989 which requested that you be kept apprised of the continuing status of the Comanche Peak power plant. We discussed the request with your staff and we understand that you are particularly interested in the results of the Augmented Inspection Team (AIT) investigation of check valve failures during "hot functional testing," and the general status of the licensing activities.

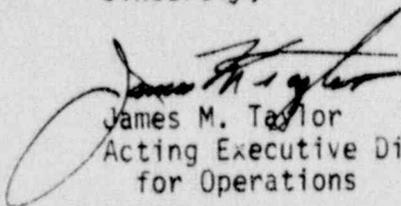
We have enclosed a copy of the AIT report and TU Electric's response to that report. This matter was also addressed in our letter to you, dated July 7, 1989, responding to the concerns raised by your constituent, J. C. Dodson.

The AIT's findings have raised two concerns. The first is a fairly straight-forward hardware problem, the failure of the check valves. The second concern relates to broader organizational weaknesses divulged by this event. In both cases, we are following TU Electric's corrective actions, as we would with any other significant inspection findings, to assure that these problems are effectively resolved before we would grant a license.

TU Electric has indicated that they expect to complete all of the construction work and operational preparations for licensing in October 1989. The NRC staff is carefully monitoring all of these activities. There is still a considerable amount of work to be completed before TU Electric will be able to certify that the plant has been completed in accordance with their license application; however, they are continuing to make substantial progress. The NRC staff will send an Operational Readiness Assessment Team to the plant in the middle of October. Based on that inspection, we will determine the extent to which the plant is ready for a low-power license (for the purpose of loading fuel and conducting start-up testing). Our decision on whether to grant a low-power license will also depend on satisfactory resolution of the issues that have been raised during the course of the staff's technical review and inspection activities, including the check valve failures and the organizational weaknesses identified by the AIT.

We hope that this information is responsive to your request.

Sincerely,


James M. Taylor
Acting Executive Director
for Operations

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Enclosures:

1. AIT Report
2. TU Electric Letter, W.J. Cahill to USNRC dated 8/18/89

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