



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

ENCLOSURE 1

OCT 16 1989

The Honorable Lloyd Bentson
United States Senator
961 Federal Building
Austin, Texas 78701

Dear Senator Bentson:

This letter responds to your letters of September 14 and 19, 1989, which forwarded concerns from Ms. Andrea Rich of Fort Worth, Texas, and Mr. and Mrs. Kendall McCook of Tolar, Texas. They raised concerns regarding the licensing process for the Comanche Peak Steam Electric Station. In particular, they focused on implications associated with the dismissal of the adjudicatory hearings in conjunction with the settlement agreement between the intervenor, Citizens Association for Sound Energy (CASE), and Texas Utilities Electric Company.

At the time of the dismissal of the proceedings, the Citizens for Fair Utility Regulation (CFUR) of Fort Worth, Texas, petitioned the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) to intervene in the proceeding in place of CASE. The Commission denied CFUR's request because they did not satisfy the criteria for late intervention set forth in Section 2.714 of Title 10 of the Code of Federal Regulations. We note that Mr. and Mrs. McCook were among those who filed affidavits supporting the CFUR petition. We have enclosed the Commission's Order, CLI-88-12, which details the consideration of and bases for the denial of CFUR's petition. Subsequently, CFUR filed a petition for review of the Commission's decision with the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit (Dockets 89-4124 and 89-4310).

It is important to recognize that the dismissal of the adjudicatory proceedings does not dispose of the issues requiring resolution; in fact, the NRC staff has continued to pursue the resolution of concerns such as those expressed in the letters from Ms. Rich and the McCooks. The problems with design and construction deficiencies have been addressed extensively by the applicant. Corrective actions have been reviewed and inspected by the NRC and are part of the public record; as an example, we have enclosed copies of Supplement 20 to the NRC's Safety Evaluation Report for Comanche Peak for your information. The Safety Evaluation Report, its supplements, and the NRC inspection reports for Comanche Peak are available to interested members of the public at the Local Public Document Room at the Somervell County Public Library in Glen Rose, Texas.


We responded to similar concerns you forwarded, related to the findings of the Augmented Inspection Team (AIT), in our letter of September 15, 1989. Concerns related to employee allegations and other current issues at Comanche Peak are addressed through our normal review and inspection activities in a manner consistent with our activities at other plants, with one significant exception. The Commission established a Special Projects organization in 1987 that was responsible for all licensing and inspection activities related to the Comanche Peak facility and the Tennessee Valley Authority facilities. This organization

reported directly to the Executive Director for Operations through 1988 and then to the Director, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation, beginning in 1989. A separate Comanche Peak Project Division continues to deal with the particularly complex regulatory problems confronting the Comanche Peak facility.

As the completion of Comanche Peak Unit 1 draws closer, we anticipate that public interest and concern, like that expressed by Ms. Rich and the McCooks, will rise. We will ensure that all issues important to safe operation of the plant are acceptably resolved before a license to load fuel and begin startup testing is granted. Any concern brought to the attention of the NRC that could affect the safe construction or operation of a nuclear power plant is pursued. In some cases, issues can be resolved after licensing, as was implied in Mr. McCook's conversation with Mr. McKee. The NRC is responsible for the regulation of the commercial nuclear industry to ensure that the public health and safety are adequately protected. Concerns or allegations of technical inadequacies, or other improprieties at the facilities we regulate, are taken seriously.

We hope that this information is responsive to your request.

Sincerely,

Original Signed By: 
James M. Taylor

James M. Taylor
Acting Executive Director
for Operations

Enclosures:

1. NRC Memorandum and Order
CLI-88-12, dated 12/21/88
2. Supplement 20 to Comanche
Peak Safety Evaluation
Report dated 11/88 (3 copies)



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

SEP 19 1989

The Honorable Lloyd Bentsen
United States Senator
961 Federal Building
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 straightforward 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,
Original Signed By
James M. Taylor
James M. Taylor
Acting Executive Director
for Operations

Enclosures:

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

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

JUL 10 1989

In Reply Refer To:
Dockets: 50-445/89-30
50-446/89-30

Mr. W. J. Cahill, Jr.
Executive Vice President
TU Electric
400 North Olive Street, Lock Box 81
Dallas, Texas 75201

Dear Mr. Cahill:

This refers to the inspection conducted by Mr. H. Livermore and other members of the Augmented Inspection Team during the period May 15 through June 16, 1989, concerning the check valve failures which allowed backflow through the auxiliary feedwater system during hot functional testing of Unit 1 at the Comanche Peak Steam Electric Station. The team's findings as described in this report were presented to you and other members of your staff at the conclusion of the inspection.

The enclosed copy of our AIT inspection report identifies areas examined during the inspection. Within these areas, the inspection consisted of selective examination of procedures and representative records, interviews with personnel, and observations by the inspectors.

As a result of this inspection, the AIT has identified a number of weaknesses in your procedures for evaluating and correcting equipment failures and malfunctions, and weaknesses in your organizational communications. Further, while your subsequent assessment of the check valve failures has been comprehensive, the AIT has identified a number of recommendations which should be addressed in your corrective action efforts. Accordingly, we request that you submit a report summarizing the lessons learned from these events and the corrective actions you plan to take, concurrently addressing the weaknesses and recommendations identified by the AIT. This report should also distinguish between those actions which need to be completed before the plant is ready to load fuel and the longer-term programmatic enhancements. Please notify us, within two weeks following your receipt of this letter, of your schedule for the submittal of such a report.

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JUL 10 1989

In accordance with 10 CFR 2.790 of the Commission's regulations, a copy of this letter and the enclosed inspection report will be placed in the NRC Public Document Room.

Should you have any further questions concerning this inspection, we will be pleased to discuss them with you.

Sincerely,

R F Warnick

R. F. Warnick, Assistant Director
for Inspection Programs
Comanche Peak Project Division
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Enclosure:

Inspection Report 50-445/89-30; 50-446/89-30

cc w/enclosure:

See next page



Log # TXX-89596
File # 10130
IR 89-30
IR 89-30

August 18, 1989

William J. Cahill, Jr.
Executive Vice President

U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Attn: Document Control Desk
Washington, D. C. 20555

SUBJECT: COMANCHE PEAK STEAM ELECTRIC STATION (CPSES)
DOCKET NOS. 50-445 AND 50-446
RESPONSE TO NRC INSPECTION REPORT NOS.
50-445/89-30; 50-446/89-30
AUGMENTED INSPECTION TEAM (AIT) INSPECTION
OF CHECK VALVE FAILURES

- REF: 1) Letter from R. F. Warnick, USNRC, to W. J. Cahill, TU Electric dated July 10, 1989
- 2) TU Electric letter logged TXX-89492, W. J. Cahill to USNRC dated July 24, 1989

Gentlemen:

Reference 1 requested that TU Electric submit a report summarizing the lessons learned from the Auxiliary Feedwater (AFW) backflow events on April 23 and May 5, 1989 and the corrective actions TU Electric planned to take. Reference 2 acknowledged the Reference 1 request and stated a report would be submitted by August 18, 1989. The report is attached.

As this report discusses, the cause of the backflow events was backflow through hung open Borg-Warner/International Pump Inc. (BW/IP) pressure seal check valves coincident with the failure of Auxiliary Operators to operate valves in the sequence specified by procedures. In response to these events, TU Electric is taking corrective action for the affected hardware, including inspection and, as necessary, rework of BW/IP check valves at CPSES. Additionally, TU Electric is taking action to address the cause of the events and prevent recurrence of similar events. These actions include the following:

- o The reassembly procedure for the BW/IP check valves has been revised to ensure that the valve disc will properly seat.
- o Administrative procedures have been revised to clearly state that the tasks in a procedure are to be performed in the sequence specified unless certain exceptions are satisfied.

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800 North Olive Street LB 81 Dallas, Texas 75201

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- o Operations personnel are receiving and will continue to receive training in the revised administrative procedures, in the need to comply with procedures in general, and in avoidance of the type of noncompliances with procedures that occurred during the April 23 and May 5 events.

TU Electric has also evaluated the backflow events on April 23 and May 5, the precursors to these events, and the Company's response to these events to determine lessons learned and identify corresponding improvements. In performing this evaluation, TU Electric also accounted for the conclusions and recommendations of the AIT, together with the weaknesses identified by the NRC at a meeting on the CPSES power ascension program on July 17, 1989.

Based upon its evaluation, TU Electric has concluded that improvements are warranted in four general areas before fuel load. These areas, and the corresponding improvements that TU Electric is making, are discussed below. The attached report provides a more detailed description of the improvements.

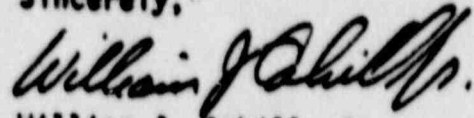
- o Management and Supervision of Operations - TU Electric is taking action to expedite the transition from a construction to an operating attitude, to provide Operations with greater control of the project, to improve the reporting of plant events and equipment failures to Operations management and supervision, and to enhance management's awareness of time and manpower needs for specific tasks.
- o Corrective Actions and Evaluation of Plant Events and Equipment Failures - TU Electric is taking action to improve the documentation and reporting of plant events and equipment failures, to increase the aggressiveness and timeliness of investigations of plant events and equipment failures, and to improve future team evaluations by TU Electric.
- o Communications Among Operators and Shifts - TU Electric is taking action to improve communications among operators and communications between shifts.
- o Personnel Awareness of Operating Events and Equipment Failures and Their Implications for System Operability - TU Electric is taking action to increase the awareness of Operations personnel concerning Work Requests and their implications for plant operability, and to improve the availability of information regarding plant events and equipment failures to Operations personnel.

TXX-89596
August 18, 1989
Page 3 of 3

The improvements discussed above are only one part of a larger effort to ensure that TU Electric will be ready to operate CPSES Unit 1. For example, TU Electric has established an Operational Readiness Program and management of the transition from construction to operations has been placed under the direction of the Vice President, Nuclear Operations. These and other efforts, together with the improvements discussed in the attached report, will help ensure that TU Electric will be ready to operate upon completion of Unit 1 construction.

In summary, TU Electric has identified the root causes of the backflow events on April 23 and May 5, 1989, is taking corrective action for these events, including action to address root causes and prevent recurrence of similar events, and is implementing improvements based on lessons learned. Consequently, TU Electric believes that it is adequately addressing the events, and that upon completion of the corrective and preventive actions and implementation of referenced improvements, the events should not pose any impediment to the issuance of an operating license for CPSES Unit 1.

Sincerely,



William J. Cahill, Jr.

TLH:daj

c - Mr. R. D. Martin, Region IV
Resident Inspectors, CPSES (3)

W. J. Cahill

cc w/enclosure:
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UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20555

ACTION

EDD Principal Correspondence Control

FROM:

DUE: 10/16/89

EDD CONTROL: 0004792
DOC DT: 09/22/89
FINAL REPLY:

Sen. Lloyd Bentsen

TO:

CA

FOR SIGNATURE OF:

** GRN **

CRC NO: 89-1084

Executive Director

DESC:

ROUTING:

ENCLOSES LETTERS FROM HARRIET IRBY AND
BILL NUCKOLS CONCERNING ISSUING A LOW-POWER
LICENSE TO COMANCHE PEAK NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

RMartin, RIV
Scinto, OBC

DATE: 10/03/89

ASSIGNED TO:

CONTACT:

NRR

Murley

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS OR REMARKS:
REPLY TO AUSTIN, TEXAS OFFICE.

NRR RECEIVED: OCT. 3, 1989
ACTION: ADSP:CRUTCHFIELD

NRR ROUTING: MURLEY/SNIEZEK
MIRAGLIA
PARTLOW
GILLESPIE
MOSSBURG

