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Docket No. 50-309

Mr. Michael Dwinell
 Birch Knolls
 Cape Elizabeth, Maine 04107

Dear Mr. Dwinell:

I am taking this opportunity to respond to your letter of January 16, 1980 to the Honorable William S. Cohen regarding the Maine Yankee Nuclear Facility. The concerns which you mentioned are discussed in Enclosure 1.

I trust the information supplied in the enclosures is responsive to your concerns.

Sincerely,

Original Signed by
 H. R. Denton

Harold R. Denton, Director
 Office of Nuclear Reactor
 Regulation

Enclosures:

1. Response to concerns
2. NUREG-0094

cc w/enclosures:

Mr. Robert H. Groce
 Senior Engineer - Licensing
 Maine Yankee Atomic Power Company
 25 Research Drive
 Westboro, Massachusetts 01581

cc w/o enclosure 2:

The Honorable William Cohen

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CONCERNS REGARDING THE MAINE YANKEE NUCLEAR FACILITY

Asymmetric Loss-of-Coolant-Accident (LOCA) Loads

Prior to restart from the recent refueling outage, Maine Yankee installed all hardware necessary to resolve the asymmetric LOCA load issue. The staff is involved in post-implementation review of these modifications.

Operator Training and Licensing

In the last several years the quality of the operator training program at Maine Yankee has improved significantly, which is illustrated by the results of the last examination of operators. During the most recent examination held in October 1979, one hundred percent of the individuals tested by the NRC successfully completed the examination.

A copy of NUREG-0094 the NRC Operator Licensing Guide is enclosed for your review. This guide describes the procedures and criteria for the issuance of operator and senior operator licenses.

March 1979 Radioactive Gas Release

On March 15, 1979, while cooling down the plant to cold shutdown conditions, there was an unplanned release of gaseous radioactivity as a result of gasket failure on a valve. The licensee submitted written information to the Commission on March 26, 1979 regarding this occurrence and specified the corrective actions that were taken. NRC Inspectors followed up on this issue during an onsite inspection, and verified that reporting requirements had been met and that appropriate corrective action had been taken.

The valve was repaired in a timely fashion, and procedures were modified to isolate the particular portion of the system prior to the establishment of shutdown cooling. The eight times the annual objective refers to a Technical Specification that requires appropriate corrective action and documentation if the experienced rate of release of radioactive material in gaseous wastes, when averaged over a calendar quarter, is such that these quantities if continued at the same release rate for a year would exceed eight times the annual objectives.

Seismic Monitoring

The following information was reported to the NRC staff during phone conversations with Maine Yankee Atomic Power Station personnel on April 18 and 19, 1979:

On April 18, 1979, operation of the accelerographs was checked. Due to corrosion of contacts it was determined that control room annunciation would not have occurred if either recorder

had triggered. Furthermore, the upper recorder may not have operated during the earthquake for the same reason. Proper operation of the lower recorder was demonstrated. The film was developed and confirmed that the instrument had not triggered. The licensee has implemented increased surveillance of the accelerographs following this event.

NRC Order Relating to Piping

No order has been issued to Maine Yankee in the past few months regarding piping cracks. I assume you might be referring to the Show Cause Order issued to Maine Yankee on March 13, 1979. This Order required the plant to be in a cold shutdown condition within 48 hours of receipt of the order, and remain shutdown until further order from the Commission pending resolution of questions concerning the ability of piping in certain safety related systems to withstand design seismic forces. Maine Yankee was shutdown in compliance with the Order on March 15, 1979. We reviewed the acceptability of the analysis techniques used as a basis for the facility's piping design. On May 24, 1979 we issued a Termination of the Order to Show Cause after we had determined that the requirements of the March 13, 1979 Order had been met.

Emergency Planning

Currently the NRC staff is involved in major effort to upgrade the state of emergency planning in and around all of our operating nuclear power facilities. Special teams have been established which will be visiting each site having an operating license to assure that this program will be carried out in an effective and timely manner. The State of Maine and Maine Yankee's emergency response plans have been submitted for our review. An Emergency Preparedness meeting is planned near the plant site in May 1980.

Spent Fuel Storage

The Maine Yankee Facility currently has an adequate spent fuel pool in which to store the spent fuel that has been generated at the site.