



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

November 9, 1993

Docket No. 50-440

Mrs. Pat Foley
2160 Howland-Wilson Road, N.E.
Warren, Ohio 44484

Dear Mrs. Foley,

Thank you for your letter expressing your concerns about the operation of the Perry Nuclear Power Plant, Unit 1. I appreciate the opportunity to describe the NRC staff's assessment of the conditions at Perry and to explain what actions the NRC has taken or plans to take in response to this situation.

The NRC is also concerned with the performance of the licensee at Perry. The NRC constantly monitors the performance of each licensee, including Perry, through (1) the resident inspectors assigned to the site, (2) periodic inspections of various areas affecting plant safety, and (3) reports that each licensee is required to make to the NRC. The staff has noted that the performance of the licensee at Perry has declined and this observation was presented to the licensee formally in the most recent Systematic Assessment of Licensee Performance (SALP). In addition, the performance at Perry was discussed during the NRC Senior Management Meeting in June 1993. The Senior Management Meeting is held semi-annually to determine whether the safety performance of various licensees warrants increased NRC attention. Although Perry was not considered to be among the worst performers discussed at this meeting, the trends observed at Perry were serious enough to warrant formal communication of the NRC concerns to the Centerior Energy Corporation Chief Executive Officer (CEO). Senior NRC Region III management then met with the CEO to discuss the areas the NRC felt needed action to correct performance deficiencies.

The NRC staff has taken or plans to take a number of other actions to monitor the performance at Perry more closely. For example:

- A group of eleven senior resident inspectors and regional management personnel recently visited Perry to observe licensee activities, particularly the programs aimed at improving performance, and to tour the plant. This visit was part of a planned activity to have senior NRC management visit the site on a quarterly basis.
- Two Region III inspectors followed by a small Engineering and Technical Support inspection team have visited the site to focus on engineering. In addition, a full Engineering and Technical Support inspection is planned in March 1994.

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- The resident inspectors from the Clinton plant will periodically visit Perry to provide an independent assessment of the adequacy of licensee improvement efforts. In addition, the Perry resident inspectors will visit Clinton to view how that plant is operated.
- The region will provide additional radiation protection and radwaste inspections.

These activities are in addition to the normal monitoring and inspection activities that were already planned for Perry.

The licensee at Perry also recognizes that there are significant performance concerns at the plant. It appears to the NRC that the licensee does understand which areas are deficient. The licensee has taken or planned a number of actions to correct the deficiencies. Licensee management presented the basic aspects of their overall plan to the NRC in two public meetings; one at the Region III offices on October 20 and the other at NRC headquarters on October 28, 1993. Problem areas addressed by the plan include management performance, plant material condition, corrective actions, critical self-assessments, and procedural compliance. Based on the presentations, the NRC believes that the licensee has developed a viable plan to deal with the issues facing Perry. Both the NRC staff and the licensee representatives agreed that the key to resolving the issues will be the effective implementation of the plan at the site.

If at any time the NRC staff believes that the performance at Perry has degraded to the point at which the plant poses an undue risk to the health and safety of the public, the plant will be required to shut down until the problems are resolved. The NRC has exercised the authority to take this action with other plants in the past and will not hesitate to use it again if the situation warrants such action.

I trust that the information I have provided will be helpful to you. If you have any questions or wish to discuss any of these issues further, please contact me.

Sincerely,



John N. Hannon, Director
Project Directorate III-3
Division of Reactor Projects III/IV/V
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

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