



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

August 20, 1990

Docket No. 50-219

Mr. E. E. Fitzpatrick
Vice President and Director
Oyster Creek Nuclear Generating Station
P.O. Box 388
Forked River, New Jersey 08731

Dear Mr. Fitzpatrick:

SUBJECT: REQUESTED DELAY OF DECISION TO INSTALL HARDENED WETWELL VENT
FOR OYSTER CREEK NUCLEAR GENERATING STATION (TAC NO. 74875)

On September 1, 1989, the NRC staff issued Generic Letter 89-16, "Installation of a Hardened Wetwell Vent," requesting that Mark I containment utilities, within 45 days, volunteer with a schedule to install a hardened wetwell vent. Otherwise, the Commission had directed the staff to perform plant-specific backfit analyses for facilities not electing to voluntarily incorporate changes. In your letter dated October 30, 1989, you did not commit to install a hardened vent unless the results of your Individual Plant Examination show that it is an appropriate risk reduction measure; and submitted information supporting this position.

The NRC letter dated January 23, 1990, informed you that since you do not intend to install the hardened vent on a voluntary basis at this time, the staff would complete a plant-specific analysis for the Oyster Creek Station. If the completed analysis supported the conclusion that modifications meet the requirements of the NRC backfit rule, a copy of the NRC staff analysis would be sent to you to provide you with another opportunity to make the modifications under the provisions of 10 CFR 50.59. The NRC letter dated June 15, 1990, transmitted the staff's backfit analysis and the staff's conclusion based on the analysis that the backfit is justified for Oyster Creek.

At your request, on July 24, 1990, you and other owners of plants with isolation condensers who had not volunteered to install a hardened wetwell vent met with the NRC staff to provide additional information to support your request that the recommended improvement be evaluated as part of the Individual Plant Examination (IPE) program; and that a decision to install the vent be delayed until completion of the IPE program.

After careful consideration of the additional supporting information provided regarding the isolation condenser plants, the staff continues to believe that Oyster Creek and the other similar plants should proceed without delay with the installation of the hardened wetwell vents. Our decision to proceed is based, in part, on the importance of the venting sequences and their role in mitigating a large radiological release. Many of these sequences are applicable to Oyster Creek since the isolation condenser could not be assured to be operable/available for these sequences. Examples of events leading to these sequences include stuck open SRV transients as well as the complete spectrum of primary system pipe ruptures. Under these depressurized conditions, the isolation condenser is not expected to function. Therefore venting is necessary under these conditions to maintain decay heat removal capability and minimize challenges to the containment.

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PDR ADOCK 05000219
PDC

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Mr. E. E. Fitzpatrick
Oyster Creek Nuclear Generating Station

Oyster Creek Nuclear
Generating Station

cc:

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Oyster Creek has Emergency Operating Procedures (EOPs) in place which call for venting of the containment for a wide range of plant conditions. The venting procedures and pathway should be as reliable as possible to assure that the operators will be able to carry out the EOP instructions. To this end, the operator should not be faced with the potential of further plant damage or possible radiological impacts on personnel when venting is a consideration. Therefore, we view the hardening of the pathway as an important step in reducing the negative consequences of venting. Based on the above and our discussions during the July 24, 1990 meeting, we still conclude that the results of our backfit analysis remain valid. We believe that proceeding without delay with the installation of the hardened wetwell vent is a prudent course of action.

Accordingly, we will be initiating an Order based on the staff's backfit analysis directing you to implement the hardened vent at Oyster Creek, unless we receive a commitment from you within two weeks from the date of this letter that you will voluntarily install a hardened vent capability at Oyster Creek.

Sincerely,

Original signed by
James G. Partlow

James G. Partlow
 Associate Director for Projects
 Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

cc: See next page

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NO w/ change with metal

*See previous white for concurrences.

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