

AUG 19 1982

The Honorable George J. Mitchell
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Mitchell:

Thank you for your letter of July 29, 1982 addressed to Mr. Richard DeYoung regarding specific concerns relative to the Maine Yankee Nuclear Power Station in Wiscasset, Maine. One of your constituents had provided you with a copy of a letter dated May 12, 1982, addressed to the Director, Inspection and Enforcement Division, related to the NRC inspection program. As a result of your request, we have reviewed our files and have found no record of receipt of the May 12 letter. Let me assure you that the NRC routinely responds to inquiries of this nature on a priority basis.

Responses to the issues addressed in the May 12, 1982 letter pertaining to the NRC inspection program at Maine Yankee are provided herein.

Currently there is one NRC resident inspector stationed at Maine Yankee. He has worked for the NRC in that capacity since January 1980. The resident inspector's education and training include a Bachelor of Science degree from the U.S. Naval Academy and eight years of training and operational experience in the Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program. This experience exceeds NRC requirements for a resident inspector at an operating reactor site. In addition, the resident inspector has been provided ten weeks of intensive training regarding commercial nuclear power plant operations including hands-on reactor simulator training. Resident inspector hands-on training is periodically updated through refresher courses taken at a simulator facility.

At the beginning of fiscal year 1982 the NRC revised its inspection program for operating reactors. The revised inspection program consists of three parts: Minimum, Basic and Supplemental. The Basic part of the revised program is considered the normal inspection program to be implemented at all operating nuclear facilities. The Basic program is implemented at Maine Yankee. This program gives first priority to completing those inspections related to operational safety verification.

During calendar year 1981, NRC inspections covered 80% of the normal inspection program. The inspections completed included control room observations, re-fueling operations, radiological controls, fire protection, maintenance, security and quality assurance. Inspections not completed, due to limited inspector resources and nonroutine inspection requirements at other facilities, included calibration, training and audits.

The revised inspection program provides for adjustment of the depth and frequency of inspection activities as a function of licensee performance in

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particular areas. If, for example, a licensee has been assessed as needing improved performance in an area, such as radiological controls, the Supplemental program would be utilized which would require expanded NRC inspection in that area. Similarly, if a licensee has been assessed as having more than adequate performance in an area, inspection in that area could be reduced for a specified period of time from the Basic program requirements, but never less than the Minimum program requirements.

Although the revised inspection program was not implemented until October 1981, the total inspection effort at Maine Yankee has increased, primarily due to increased "hands-on" inspection by the resident inspector. Data for calendar years 1978 through 1981 demonstrate an increase from 830 manhours in 1978, 730 in 1979, 1200 in 1980 and 2900 manhours in 1981. It is evident from these figures that there has been a substantial increase in direct or "hands-on" inspection effort at Maine Yankee.

Annual nuclear facility appraisals are performed as part of the NRC's Systematic Assessment of Licensee Performance (SALP) program. A USNRC publication, NUREG 0834 published in August 1981, provided a nationwide rating of facilities. Maine Yankee was rated average. Future SALP reports will be made available to Local Public Document Rooms. The next Maine Yankee SALP will be conducted in September 1982.

A copy of this letter is being forwarded to the Maine Nuclear Referendum Committee.

If I or my staff can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

(Signed) William J. Dircks

William J. Dircks
Executive Director
for Operations

EDO *[Signature]*
WJDircks
8/8/82

OCA *[Signature]*
8/19/82

*approved for transmittal via word processor 8/17/82

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