



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

REGION III
801 WARRENVILLE ROAD
LISLE, ILLINOIS 60532-4351

April 4, 1994

Docket Nos. 50-373 and 50-374
License Nos. NPF-11 and NPF-18
EA 93-300

Commonwealth Edison Company
ATTN: Mr. Michael J. Wallace
Vice President,
Chief Nuclear Officer
Executive Towers West III
1400 Opus Place, Suite 300
Downers Grove, Illinois 60515

Dear Mr. Wallace:

SUBJECT: LASALLE COUNTY STATION - UNITS 1 AND 2
NOTICE OF VIOLATION AND PROPOSED IMPOSITION OF CIVIL
PENALTY - \$75,000, NOTICE OF DEVIATION
(Inspection Report Nos. (50-373/93031; 50-374/93031);
(50-373/93036; 50-374/93036); AND (50-373/93040;
50-374/93040))

This refers to the maintenance inspection conducted on November 1 through 24, 1993, the electrical and instrumentation and control modification inspection conducted on November 29 through December 21, 1993, and the engineering and technical support inspection conducted on November 18, 1993, through January 5, 1994, at LaSalle County Station, Units 1 and 2. The reports documenting these inspections were sent to you by letters dated December 23, 1993, and January 25, 1994.

During the inspections, violations of NRC requirements were identified. An enforcement conference was held on February 1, 1994, to discuss the apparent violations, their causes and your corrective actions.

Section I of the enclosed Notice of Violation and Proposed Imposition of Civil Penalty (Notice) describes two violations involving failure to take corrective action for the breaker and damper issues.

In March 1989, you received a 10 CFR 21 notification from Asea Brown Boveri (ABB) concerning potential lubrication degradation in your 4.16KV and 6.9KV safety-related circuit breakers. Your inadequate evaluation of this issue ultimately led to a safety-related breaker failure in 1992. By November 1993, you had not yet inspected a representative sample of these breakers and your inspection procedure was insufficient to verify the vendor's lubrication recommendations.

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In June 1989, we issued you a violation for failure to take corrective action relative to reactor building ventilation system secondary containment isolation damper failures. Subsequently, numerous damper failures have occurred, despite vendor and LaSalle Station engineering recommendations to resolve the problem.

The inspections at LaSalle Station identified that your corrective action and self-assessment programs have not been fully effective, resulting in unnecessary safety related and important-to-safety equipment failures. The deficiencies in these programs manifested themselves in several areas including, issue identification, root cause analysis, management assessment, and oversight. Additionally, the inspections identified ineffective communications and interface between your engineering, maintenance, and operations departments. A general, plant-wide lack of a questioning attitude appears to exist which directly affects your ability to identify and resolve problems. Your past performance at times has focused on quick-fix solutions instead of long-term problem resolution. Effective steps need to be employed to reverse this trend and address current and future problems in a thorough and complete manner.

Our letter to Mr. James J. O'Connor dated January 25, 1994, noted that the NRC senior managers are concerned about adverse performance trends at LaSalle Station. The most recent SALP 11 report issued on July 21, 1993, states that the overall performance at LaSalle Station declined. The decline was attributed to a general lack of management aggressiveness in identifying and resolving problems. Two escalated actions were issued to you in late 1993 for a breakdown in the radiation protection program and failure to meet fitness-for-duty requirements.

NRC recognizes that upon our identification of the breaker issue, you completed an operability evaluation and developed a refurbishment program. All but seven of the affected breakers have been refurbished. The remaining seven have acceptable justifications for deferral. Regarding the damper issue, you initiated a root cause evaluation in January 1994.

At the enforcement conference you presented a plan to improve the corrective action process. Some of the improvements included communicating expectations, establishing a dedicated, experienced root cause analysis group, emphasizing the role of engineering in addressing material condition deficiencies, improving the problem tracking and corrective action closure process, and developing and implementing an improved self-assessment process. We recognize that many of these initiatives were developed during a comprehensive and critical self-assessment recently performed at

LaSalle Station (Business Development Team (BDT) review) which identified the root causes of the problems experienced in this specific case and which exist more broadly at LaSalle Station. Detailed corrective actions addressing issues developed by the BDT are being formulated. We will closely monitor your implementation of these actions.

The violations are considered a significant breakdown in the control of your corrective action program and are classified in the aggregate as a Severity Level III problem in accordance with the "General Statement of Policy and Procedure for NRC Enforcement Actions," (Enforcement Policy) 10 CFR Part 2, Appendix C.

We recognize that the root causes of the underlying equipment problems at LaSalle, which had their genesis several years ago, may take time to fully correct. However, you had the information indicating deficiencies for a considerable time and your staff failed to identify and evaluate it. Inadequate identification and ineffective resolution of problems, as found here, are deficiencies that need to be corrected now.

Therefore, to emphasize the need for management involvement and oversight of your corrective action program and in particular the need for you to identify failures and take prompt corrective action, I have been authorized after consultation with the Director, Office of Enforcement, and the Deputy Executive Director for Nuclear Reactor Regulation, Regional Operations, and Research to exercise discretion under section VII of the Enforcement Policy and issue the enclosed Notice of Violation and Proposed Imposition of Civil Penalty (Notice) in the amount of \$75,000 for the Severity Level III problem.

In assessing this penalty, the NRC has considered the significance of both of the violations that make up this severity III problem, the number of opportunities you had to identify and correct these violations, the duration of time over which corrective actions were not taken, your past overall performance, and, most significantly, the fact that NRC had to identify the violations. The NRC has also considered the efforts that you have made and are making to understand and address the performance problems at the LaSalle station as evidenced by the development of the BDT review and its associated action plan. But for those efforts which warranted the exercise of enforcement discretion, this penalty would have been substantially higher based on application of the normal escalation and mitigation factors.

In exercising this discretion, I emphasize that NRC expects that Commonwealth Edison will continue its recent aggressive actions to improve its performance at the LaSalle station.

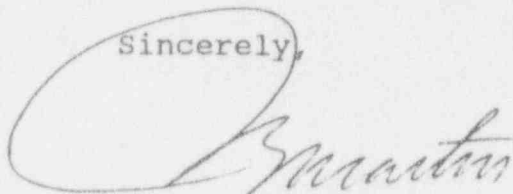
Section II of the enclosed Notice describes eight violations not assessed a civil penalty involving inadequate testing of a modification, failure to test two safety/relief valves, failure to follow procedures, inadequate procedures, and inadequate control of measuring and test equipment. Also enclosed is a Notice of Deviation for failure to set the Electrical Power Assembly independent trip units within the nominal operating range specified in the Final Safety Analysis Report.

You are required to respond to this letter and should follow the instructions specified in the enclosed Notices when preparing your response. In your response, you should document the specific actions taken and any additional actions you plan to prevent recurrence. After reviewing your response to these Notices, including your proposed corrective actions and the results of future inspections, the NRC will determine whether further NRC enforcement action is necessary to ensure compliance with NRC regulatory requirements.

In accordance with 10 CFR 2.790 of the NRC's "Rules of Practice," a copy of this letter, its enclosures, and your responses will be placed in the NRC Public Document Room.

The responses directed by this letter and the enclosed Notices are not subject to the clearance procedures of the Office of Management and Budget as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1980, Public Law No. 96-511.

Sincerely,



John B. Martin
Regional Administrator

Enclosures:

1. Notice of Violation and Proposed Imposition of Civil Penalty
2. Notice of Deviation

cc w/enclosure:

- L. O. DelGeorge, Vice President,
Nuclear Oversight and Regulatory Services
- W. Murphy, Site Vice President
- D. J. Ray, Station Manager

Commonwealth Edison
Company

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cc w/encl continued

J. Lockwood, Regulatory Assurance
Supervisor

D. Farrar, Nuclear Regulatory
Services Manager

OC/LFDCB

Resident Inspectors, LaSalle,
Dresden, Quad Cities

Richard Hubbard

J. W. McCaffrey, Chief, Public
Utilities Division

Licensing Project Manager, NRR

Robert Newmann, Office of Public
Counsel

State Liaison Officer

Chairman, Illinois Commerce
Commission

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EA File (2)

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State of Illinois

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