



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Bureau of Standards
Washington, D.C. 20234

December 6, 1982

Mr. Richard W. Starostecki
Director, Division of Projects and
Resident Programs
U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Region 1
631 Park Avenue
King of Prussia, PA 19406

Re-Docket No. 50-184

Dear Mr. Starostecki:

On Friday November 26, 1982 during routine refueling operations, fuel element #345 was being transferred from core position D-1 to D-7. The operation requires the use of transfer arm E-2 which was difficult to operate. In the process of either transferring the element from the D-1 pick-up tool or rotating the E-2 transfer arm from D-1 to the C-2 position, the element fell to the upper grid. It is estimated that the element fell a distance of less than 2 feet. There were no exposures or releases of any kind as a result of this occurrence.

Subsequently, the element was located standing almost vertically on top of the grid. It was recovered and transferred to the storage pool for inspection. The inspection showed the element to be undamaged with only a small inconsequential dent on the nozzle of the lower end box. The element was then returned to its position in the core. There was no difficulty in removing or seating the element. Following review by the Hazards Evaluation Committee, reactor operation was resumed on schedule on November 29, 1982 and since then everything has been normal.

It appears that the element dropped as a result of the difficulty in operating the E-2 transfer arm. Overhauling the transfer mechanisms has been under review for sometime. However, this is a major undertaking and should only be done if circumstances clearly warrant it and alternate methods are exhausted. This review is continuing. In the meantime the program of periodically exercising transfer arms to keep them free will continue. Water lubrication may also be applied as necessary. These have been successful in the past in providing freer operation of the transfer arms. Additional efforts are planned to improve the operation of the E-2 transfer arm prior to the next refueling.

I hope that this letter provides the information you requested.

Sincerely,

Robert S. Carter

Robert S. Carter
Chief, Reactor Radiation Division

cc: Mr. Cecil Thomas, NRC

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