

MAY 23 1994

Docket No. 50-271

Mr. Donald A. Reid
Vice President, Operations
Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Corporation
RD 5, Box 169
Ferry Road
Brattleboro, Vermont 05301

Dear Mr. Reid:

SUBJECT: NRC INSPECTION NO. 50-271/94-08 - OPERATIONAL SAFETY TEAM
INSPECTION FOLLOW-UP

This refers to the safety inspection conducted by Messrs. D. Kern, P. Sena, and D. Dorman on March 28 to April 1, 1994 at the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Station, Vernon, Vermont. Areas relevant to the health and safety of the public examined during this period are described in the enclosed report. Our findings were based upon personnel interviews, direct observations of performance, and independent evaluation of selected procedures, records, and calculations. Your dedication of resources to support the inspection enhanced the depth of inspection findings and was greatly appreciated. The preliminary results have been discussed with Mr. Robert Wanczyk and other members of your staff at the conclusion of the inspection.

The results of an Operational Safety Team Inspection (OSTI), conducted in response to a perceived performance decline at your facility, were previously documented in NRC Inspection Report 50-271/93-80. Your response letter, dated November 12, 1994, listed several corrective actions which you intended to implement to address performance weaknesses identified in the OSTI report. This follow-up inspection was conducted to evaluate the comprehensiveness and effectiveness of your corrective actions. Overall improvement was observed in several areas. Plant manager meetings effectively communicate daily work activities and emergent problems. Industry and vendor experience reviews are of greater depth and have reduced the likelihood of emergent safety vulnerabilities. Evaluation and causal analysis for potentially reportable occurrences have become more detailed. Additionally, the initial efforts of your corrective action task force to develop a streamlined, single path corrective action process are promising.

Notwithstanding these performance improvements, your initiatives have been only partially effective in addressing several previously identified areas of concern. It appears that your staff did not effectively evaluate longstanding anomalous and potentially degraded conditions identified during this inspection. Specifically our inspectors concluded that station response to sustained elevated 'A' core spray discharge header pressure lacked the proper management oversight and organizational communication necessary ensure timely and comprehensive

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resolution of this safety significant condition. Root cause analysis for routine corrective action reports are narrowly focused and the threshold for initiating more rigorous root cause determinations remains too high. By accepting these standards, management has not effectively assessed the broader human performance and work control process issues.

Self assessment initiatives have been beneficial on a limited basis. We observed improved self assessment capabilities and heightened management involvement in the corrective action processes at some positions within your organization. However, managers' expectations for performance have not been consistent among departments. We note that your internal audits have likewise identified varying levels of quality among departmental self assessments. You have dedicated continued attention to strengthen the consistency of departmental performance expectations and self assessments.

No reply to this report is necessary. Your efforts to address the findings of this report will be evaluated during future inspections. Your cooperation with us is appreciated.

Sincerely,

Original Signed By:
James C. Linville

James C. Linville, Chief
Projects Branch No. 3
Division of Reactor Projects

Enclosure: NRC Inspection Report No. 50-271/94-08

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cc w/encl:

R. Wanczyk, Plant Manager

J. Thayer, Vice President, Yankee Atomic Electric Company

L. Tremblay, Senior Licensing Engineer, Yankee Atomic Electric Company

J. Gilroy, Director, Vermont Public Interest Research Group, Inc.

D. Tefft, Administrator, Bureau of Radiological Health, State of New Hampshire

Chief, Safety Unit, Office of the Attorney General, Commonwealth of Massachusetts

R. Gad, Esquire

G. Bisbee, Esquire

R. Sedano, Vermont Department of Public Service

T. Rapone, Massachusetts Executive Office of Public Safety

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Nuclear Safety Information Center (NSIC)

K. Abraham, PAO (2 copies)

NRC Resident Inspector

State of New Hampshire, SLO Designee

State of Vermont, SLO Designee

Commonwealth of Massachusetts, SLO Designee

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Region I Docket Room (with concurrences)

R. Conte, DRP

J. Shedlosky, DRP

M. Oprendeck, DRP

bcc w/encl (VIA E-MAIL):

W. Dean, OEDO

D. Dorman, NRR

W. Butler, NRR

M. Shannon, ILPB

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