

MAR 0 4 1983

Barbara Belson
Box 352
Quoque, New York 11959

Dear Ms. Belson:

I am pleased to respond to your recent letter to Chairman Palladino regarding the Shoreham Nuclear Power Station.

In your letter you expressed a concern with the possible threat of radiation leakage and the capability of evacuation plans to permit your family to leave the area. The NRC shares your concern for the health and safety of the residents of Long Island. I recognize that many people living near nuclear power plants have heightened concerns about safety, particularly since the accident at Three Mile Island. You also expressed concerns regarding faulty wires and piping at Shoreham. Let me explain some of the NRC activities that pertain to these concerns.

Regarding evacuation plans for the Shoreham plant, the NRC is responsible for reviewing the onsite Emergency Plan. This review will assure that licensee procedures provide adequate assessment of emergency conditions and early notification of significant problems, including radiation releases in excess of limits. Additionally, NRC will assure that licensee emergency procedures require the onsite person in charge of plant operations to inform federal, state and local officials of abnormal or emergency situations at the facility including radiation releases in excess of limits. In addition, the licensee emergency procedures will require recommendations to be made to those officials so that appropriate actions, including evacuation if necessary, can be taken to protect public health and safety. Furthermore, a system has been established within the NRC to receive event reports, on a 24-hour basis, and evaluate each significant event as it is reported. It is our standard practice to independently notify State officials of those events with more than minor significance. Any event that could impact public health and safety would result in the activation of NRC regional and headquarters emergency response centers. In addition, depending on the severity of the event, a Region I response team, including the assigned Resident Inspector, would be dispatched to the site.

As you may be aware, Suffolk County has recently resolved not to adopt or implement an offsite radiological emergency plan for Shoreham. The effects of this action relative to the Shoreham licensing proceeding are, at this writing, unknown.

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Regarding your concerns about faulty wires and piping at Shoreham, NRC Region I conducts inspections of safety systems at Shoreham and monitors plant safety throughout the life of the plant. Actually, each plant safety system will be checked several times to verify operability before the plant is placed in full operation. At Shoreham, the NRC has required the licensee to implement a three-fold process for determining the dependability and operability of systems at a given plant. This process and its results are reviewed by the NRC.

First, the design and construction practices, which include multiple quality control inspections and functional tests of plant components important to safety, are completed. These inspections and tests provide reasonable assurance that these components will perform satisfactorily in service. Secondly, before the nuclear chain reaction in the reactor is ever allowed to be started, a series of preoperational tests are performed. These tests verify the operability of equipment in the plant systems and provide assurance that plant components, systems and sub-systems will perform satisfactorily when operated as a unit. Third, only after successful resolution of any problems that were identified during the design, construction and preoperational testing programs and after verification that there are sufficient numbers of trained, qualified and licensed personnel to operate and manage the plant will the licensee receive authorization from NRC to permit the chain reaction to start. Moreover, initial operation is accompanied by a series of confirmatory plant tests at very low power levels and power level is then gradually increased when the tests and operating experience confirm that the plant is operating safely.

Through experience, the practice of performing a series of plant system tests at power level plateaus of less than 5% and then 25, 50, 75 and 100% of rated power, has proven to be a reasonable and safe approach to commercial power operation.

In the course of their work, NRC inspectors do identify problems. These problems are analyzed to determine their cause and allow us to require corrective action beyond the scope of the original problem. The NRC does not rely only on LILCO to provide information about plant construction; our independent inspection of the plant provides information so that the NRC can make a decision regarding the safe operation of the plant. In this regard we also have taken additional steps to satisfy ourselves as to the safety status of the plant. For example, we recently conducted an exhaustive unannounced team inspection using Senior Resident Inspectors from other sites, as well as my senior supervisors. A copy of their results is provided for your information. We are taking appropriate steps and precautions to assure public health and safety.

Since 1974, Region I inspectors have conducted more than 170 such independent inspections including over 19,000 hours of inspection time at Shoreham. Since September 1979, at least one full time NRC resident inspector has been stationed at Shoreham to provide an onsite view of plant activity. If a favorable decision is made to allow fuel load and operations, we will continue to station at least one full time resident inspector at the site.

You also asked that we come and talk with the residents of the East End of Long Island. We appreciate the desire for residents and responsible local officials to be kept informed of activities associated with nearby facilities. Suffolk County is currently participating in public hearings regarding Shoreham. We have and are continuing to meet with representatives of county government in this regard.

I trust that this brief discussion is responsive to your inquiry. Let me assure you that we will not allow Shoreham to operate until we are satisfied that it can be operated safely. Should you have additional questions please feel free to call me collect at (215) 337-5229.

Sincerely,

Original Signed By:

Richard W. Starostecki, Director
Division of Project and Resident
Programs

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