Wisconsin Electric POWER COMPANY
231 WEST MICHIGAN, MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN 53201

April 4, 1974

Mr. John F. O'Leary, Director
Directorate of Licensing
U. S. Atomic Energy Commission
Washington, D. C. 20545

Dear Mr. O'Leary:

DOCKET NO. 50-266
MOMENTARY LOSS OF CONTAINMENT INTEGRITY
POINT BEACH NUCLEAR PLANT

This letter is to report the details of an abnormal occurrence at the Point Beach Nuclear Plant, Unit 1, Facility Operating License No. DPR-24, as defined by Section 15.1.a.B of the Technical Specifications and, more specifically, by Section 15.3.6.A.a of the Limiting Conditions for Operation. This written report, filed in accordance with Section 15.6.6.A.2 of the Technical Specifications, follows a telephone report made to Mr. T. Tamplin of Region III, Directorate of Regulatory Operations, on March 29, 1974, as required by Section 15.6.A.1 of the Technical Specifications.

At approximately 3:00 P.M. on March 29, 1973, preparations were made to conduct a pressure test of a number of penetrations in Pipeway #1 at Point Beach per Operations Refueling Test Procedure, ORT #81. As a preliminary to this test, any residual pressure in the penetration envelopes was relieved by momentarily removing a 1/4 inch threaded drain cap from the end of each of the penetrations where they protrude out of the containment wall. When the drain cap was removed from penetration #32, air blew lightly for several seconds and showed no signs of diminishing. Suspecting a leak into the penetration from the containment or piping within the penetration, the operator replaced the cap.

To determine the source of the in-leakage to penetration #32, a test arrangement was attached to the drain hole to pressurize the penetration envelope. With air pressure applied to the envelope, an inspection inside the containment disclosed

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air issuing from the containment pressure sensing line (penetration #32A). This appears to confirm that the 3/4 inch diameter sensing line has a leak within the boundary of penetration #32, in which case it must be deduced that on the three occasions that the drain cap was briefly removed, containment integrity was violated. We believe the path was from the containment through the normally open sensing line via the defective pipe into penetration #32, and thence to the auxiliary building via the momentarily uncapped 1/4 inch drain.

The containment pressure at the time of this occurrence was 1.2 psig. Radioactive gas and particulate levels within containment were below alarm setpoints. The total accumulated time that the 1/4 inch drain cap was removed to depressurize the penetration, to attach the test assembly and to remove the test arrangement is estimated at approximately 50 seconds. Neither the local auxiliary building monitors nor the auxiliary building exhaust stack monitors indicated any change in activity during or shortly following the cap removal. The operator conducted his own personal monitoring at the completion of the penetration tests and no contamination of his person or clothing was apparent. Therefore, while a discharge from the containment to the auxiliary building might be calculated, it is considered the figure would be insignificant and not meaningful.

It is planned that the sensing line in penetration #32A will be repaired during the refueling shutdown of Unit 1 which commences on April 6, 1974. Operating personnel have been advised to remove the penetration drain caps slowly and carefully during future tests of the penetrations and to determine that pressure differences have equalized across the cap before its complete removal. While this procedure will not prevent this type of event, it will permit a more rapid reestablishment of containment integrity, should a penetration leak be suspected.

Very truly yours,

Sol Burstein

Executive Vice President

cc: Mr. James G. Keppler, Regional Director
Directorate of Regulatory Operations, Region III