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UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20555

February 3, 1992

Docket No. 50-333

Mr. John C. Brons
President and Chief Operating Officer
New York Power Authority
123 Main Street
White Plains, New York 10601

Dear Mr. Brons:

On January 14 and 15, 1992, NRC senior managers met to review the performance of nuclear power plants licensed to operate by the NRC. These meetings are conducted semiannually to focus NRC resources on those plants and related issues of greatest safety significance. At this meeting, the James A. FitzPatrick Nuclear Power Plant was categorized as requiring close monitoring. Plants in this category have been identified as having weaknesses that warrant increased NRC attention from both Headquarters and the Regional Office until the licensee demonstrates a period of improved performance.

A summary of the discussions held related to the FitzPatrick plant is provided below:

The performance of operations, radiological controls, and safety assessment and quality verification at the FitzPatrick facility has been in decline for over a year. Of particular concern have been the number of significant personnel errors which led to automatic shutdowns of the facility, an event which led to the unmonitored release of radioactivity to the environment, and the failure of the operator requalification program. An NRC Diagnostic Evaluation Team Inspection was conducted in September and October 1991 at the Fitzpatrick plant to identify the causes of the decline in performance. The team identified significant weaknesses requiring improvement. These weaknesses include failure of corporate management to adequately and effectively plan for the operational support of the FitzPatrick plant, inadequate corporate and site management oversight and direction, lack of resource allocation and utilization, industry experience not used effectively, inadequate standards for performance, and ineffective communications and teamwork between the FitzPatrick plant and the corporate office.

The licensee has been responsive to these NRC findings. Financial and personnel resources have been committed. The licensee has developed a Results Improvement Program to address root causes and achieve sustained performance improvement. The NRC has begun its review of the program and will closely monitor its continued development and implementation to ensure that the desired results are achieved.

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An NRC Commission meeting, open to the public, has been scheduled for February 5, 1992, to review the results of the latest meeting of NRC senior managers. Mr. Thomas T. Martin, the Region I Administrator, has discussed the basis for our conclusion with regard to the FitzPatrick plant with members of your staff.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, do not hesitate to call me.

Sincerely,

Original Signed By:
James M. Taylor
James M. Taylor
Executive Director for Operations

cc:
See next page

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John C. Brons

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