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Docket No. 50-255  
License No. DPR-20  
EA 84-38

Consumers Power Company  
ATTN: Mr. R. B. DeWitt  
Vice President  
Nuclear Operations  
212 West Michigan Avenue  
Jackson, MI 49201

Gentlemen:

This refers to the special safety inspection conducted by Messrs. P. C. Lovendale and L. R. Greger of the Region III staff on March 22-23, 1984 of activities at the Palisades Nuclear Generating Plant, authorized by the NRC Provisional Operating License No. DPR-20. The results of this special inspection were discussed with Mr. R. Montross and others of your staff at the conclusion of the inspection and during an enforcement conference on April 27, 1984 at the NRC Region III office. The special inspection was conducted to review the circumstances surrounding an unplanned radiation exposure received by a worker during diving operations in the refueling cavity.

The inspection showed that an individual was allowed to enter a high radiation area (refueling cavity) without proper radiological controls. Upon review of this matter, we have concluded that an exposure in excess of 10 CFR Part 20 limits occurred. This incident is of significant regulatory concern because it evidences a breakdown in your radiation protection program.

An incident concerning radiological diving operations was brought to your attention in IE Information Notice No. 82-31, "Overexposure of Diver During Work in Fuel Storage Pool," dated July 30, 1982. However, this information was not utilized by your staff during diving operations in the refueling cavity tilt machine area on March 18, 1984. The performance of your radiation protection staff in this incident appears to be a departure from the otherwise good performance we have observed during recent inspections.

After consultation with the Director, Office of Inspection and Enforcement, I have been authorized to issue the enclosed Notice of Violation. The violations described in the attached Notice of Violation, involving the unplanned radiation exposure, are classified as a Severity Level III problem in accordance with the NRC Enforcement Policy. Normally, a civil penalty is proposed for Severity Level III violations. However, after considering all relevant circumstances, including your prompt identification and reporting of the event, your good prior performance in this area, the

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overall improvements made in your radiation safety program over the last few years, and our belief that this was an isolated event in light of the significant number of well-controlled entries into high radiation areas made during the current outage, we have exercised our discretion and have decided not to propose a civil penalty in this case.

In response to this letter, please follow the instructions in the enclosed Notice. Your response should specifically address the corrective actions you have taken or plan to take for ensuring that unnecessary exposures resulting from radiological diving operations will not occur again at the Palisades facility. Your written reply to this letter and the results of future inspections will be considered in determining whether further enforcement action is appropriate.

In accordance with 10 CFR 2.790(a), a copy of this letter and the enclosure will be placed in the NRC Public Document Room unless you notify this office, by telephone, within ten days of the date of this letter and submit written application to withhold information contained therein within thirty days of the date of this letter. Such application must be consistent with the requirements of 2.790(b)(1). If we do not hear from you in this regard within the specified periods noted above, a copy of this letter, the enclosure, and your response to this letter will be placed in the Public Document Room.

The response directed by this letter and the enclosed Notice are not subject to the clearance procedure of the Office of Management and Budget as required by the Paperwork Reduction Action of 1980, PL 96-511.

Sincerely,

Original signed by  
James G. Keppler

James G. Keppler  
Regional Administrator

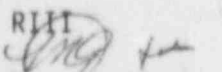
Enclosure: Notice  
of Violation


cc w/encl:

D. J. Vandewalle, Nuclear  
Licensing Administrator  
R. W. Montross, Manager  
Ronald Callen, Michigan  
Public Service Commission  
W. Teegardin, Underwater  
Constructors, Inc.

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