Central file

AUG 15 1984

Mr. Zack T. Pate, President
Institute of Nuclear Power Operations
1100 Circle 75 Parkway
Suite 1500
Atlanta, Georgia 30339

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Dear Mr. Pate:

I am writing in response to your letter of July 16, 1984 wherein you expressed concern regarding a recent article in a private publication, INSIDE NRC, which was apparently based in part upon information released from an ongoing NRC staff study. The NRC study in question involved a review of frequency and causes of reactor scrams which occurred at U. S. nuclear power plants during calendar year 1983. Data from the study was discussed at a general meeting of the ACRS on May 11, 1984.

The specific concern you expressed was that the article presented the NRC data in a manner which appeared to be in conflict with a recent INPO study on the same subject. When the data was presented to the ACRS, the study was still ongoing and the staff had not yet published the complete study results including an explanation of how the data was collected and reduced. The study has subsequently been completed and a copy is enclosed for your information. When read in context, I do not believe that the NRC data is in conflict with the INPO study. As discussed in the NRC report, the staff has computed the overall combined frequency of manual and automatic trips from all power levels for 1983 to be 6.5 trips/plant/year and determined the average frequency of automatic trips from operating power levels in 1983 to be 4.3 trips/plant/year. This latter figure is entirely consistent with the 1983 automatic trip frequency reported by your staff in their recent report (i.e., approximately 4.3 trips/plant/year). In addition, when this figure is compared with trip frequencies estimated for the years 1980-81-82 based on NRC "Grey Book" reports, it appears that the average annual automatic trip frequency has decreased in 1983.

A copy of this letter and the enclosure are being provided to the ACRS. The study is also being made publicly available through the NRC Public Document Room.

Sincerely,
Original signed by
Victor Stello

William J. Dircks
Executive Director for Operations

RD-25
INPO

Enclosure:
Staff Report on Trips of U.S.
Power Reactors in 1983

RD-10-1A
ATWS

*SEE PREVIOUS ORC - REVISED PER EDO 8/14/84

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for

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PDR

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The specific concern you expressed was that the article presented the NRC data in a manner which appeared to be in conflict with a recent INPO study on the same subject. The INPO study reported an overall decrease in the number of reactor scrams in 1983 from the number in previous years, while the INSIDE NRC article reported that the NRC data showed an increase. You requested that I "set the record straight" regarding this apparent conflict.

I regret any confusion which may have resulted from the out-of-context use of the NRC scram data. When the data was presented to the ACRS, the study was still ongoing and the staff had not yet published the complete study results including an explanation of how the data was collected and reduced. The study has subsequently been completed and a copy is enclosed for your information. When read in context, I do not believe that the NRC data is in conflict with the INPO study. As discussed in the NRC report, the staff has computed the overall combined frequency of manual and automatic trips from all power levels for 1983 to be 6.5 trips/plant/year and determined the average frequency of automatic trips from operating power levels in 1983 to be 4.3 trips/plant/year. This latter figure is entirely consistent with the 1983 automatic trip frequency reported by your staff in their recent report (i.e., approximately 4.3 trips/plant/year). In addition, when this figure is compared with trip frequencies estimated for the years 1980-81-82 based on NRC "Grey Book" reports, it appears that the average annual automatic trip frequency has decreased in 1983.

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Enclosure:
Staff Report on Trips of U.S.
Power Reactors in 1983

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