



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

January 29, 1996

Mr. Oliver D. Kingsley, Jr.
President, TVA Nuclear and Chief Nuclear Officer
Tennessee Valley Authority
3B Lookout Place
1101 Market Street
Chattanooga, TN 37402-2801

Dear Mr. Kingsley:

On January 17-18, 1996, NRC senior managers met to evaluate the nuclear safety performance of operating reactors, fuel facilities, and other materials licensees. The NRC conducts this meeting semiannually to determine if the safety performance of various licensees exhibits sufficient weaknesses to warrant increased NRC attention or if it is trending adversely and requires steps be taken to communicate concerns to the utility's president or board of directors. At the January 1996 Senior Management Meeting, Browns Ferry Units 3 and 1 were discussed.

Browns Ferry Unit 1 remains a Category 3 plant and requires NRC authorization to operate. Plants in this category have significant weaknesses and warrant maintaining the unit in a shutdown condition until the licensee can demonstrate that adequate programs have been established and implemented to correct the weaknesses. The Commission's authorization for the restart of Unit 3 moved it from a Category 3 status to a Category 2 status. A summary of the NRC discussion related to Browns Ferry Units 3 and 1 follows:

Browns Ferry completed the recovery of Unit 3 which entailed extensive modification to the plant systems and procedures. Browns Ferry successfully completed the preoperational test and operational readiness programs which demonstrated that the plant's equipment and staff were ready to restart the unit. The Commission authorized the Regional Administrator to approve restart of Unit 3 upon completion of open issues. The approval to restart was issued on November 19, 1995, and the restart and power ascension were completed on December 14, 1995, with a minimum of problems. The unit experienced no major equipment failures and no consequential human performance errors during the power ascension evolution. There were no unacceptable Unit 2 and Unit 3 interactions and all performance objectives of power ascension were successfully met. Browns Ferry must now successfully demonstrate sustained dual-unit operations. The status of Unit 1 is indeterminate and it remains defueled and is in a long-term layup.

The NRC plans to continue to closely monitor the programs and progress at Browns Ferry Units 3 and 1.

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Mr. Oliver D. Kingsley, Jr.

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Mr. Stewart D. Ebnetter, the Region II Administrator, has discussed the bases for our conclusions with regard to Browns Ferry Units 3 and 1 with members of your staff.

An NRC Commission meeting, open to the public, has been scheduled to be held in the Commissioners' Conference Room in Rockville, Maryland, on January 31, 1996, at 10:00 a.m., to review the results of the latest meeting of NRC senior managers.

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

Docket Nos. 50-259, 50-296

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