



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

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Docket No.: 50-382

MEMORANDUM FOR: Atomic Safety and Licensing Appeal Board for
Waterford 3

FROM: Darrell G. Eisenhut, Director
Division of Licensing
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

SUBJECT: BOARD NOTIFICATION REGARDING ISSUANCE OF LOW POWER OPERATING
LICENSE FOR WATERFORD 3 (BOARD NOTIFICATION NO. 84-184)

This is to inform the Appeal Board that the staff is preparing to issue, in the near future, a low power operating license to Louisiana Power and Light to operate Waterford Steam Electric Station, Unit No. 3 up to 5% of rated power.

The staff has reviewed the applicant's responses and corrective actions taken to date with respect to 23 areas of concern arising from the Task Force's allegation review, and feels they address each issue to satisfaction. A Supplemental Safety Evaluation Report (SSER No. 9) will be prepared before a low power license is issued that will document the staff's assessment.

With respect to the basemat, the staff is completing its review utilizing additional information recently received from the applicant. The staff will not consider acting on the low power license until it is satisfied that the basemat will perform its intended functions. It should be noted that the staff response due to the Board on December 17, 1984 may contain differing views on the basemat adequacy.

In preparing to respond to the motion filed on November 8, 1984, by the Government Accountability Project for the Joint Intervenors, the staff has reviewed the supporting materials and has not yet identified anything which would alter our conclusions as to plant safety. The staff will assure itself that nothing in the motion warrants further consideration before acting on the low power license.

There are two new investigations underway by the NRC Office of Investigations in addition to those referred to in Supplement 7 to the Staff SER that may have a bearing on licensing.

Finally, the staff has considered the safety implications of plant operation at low power in terms of risk, potential accidents, and plant capacity when compared to operation at full power, and makes the following observations.

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There are three major factors which contribute to a substantial reduction in risk for low power testing as compared to continuous full power operation. First, there is additional time available for the operators to correct the loss of important safety systems needed to mitigate relatively high risk events, or to take alternate courses of actions. Second, the fission product inventory during this time would be very much less than during full power operation. Third, there is a reduction in required capacity for mitigating systems at low power.

Under these conditions, the risk is so small only onsite emergency preparedness findings are required for operation at up to 5% of full power. Nevertheless, Waterford has conducted a full scale FEMA exercise covering onsite and offsite emergency preparedness and FEMA has reported that no Category A deficiencies were identified. Further, FEMA has concluded that the four emergency preparedness issues specified in the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board's Partial Initial Decision of November 3, 1982, as amended by Memorandum and Order dated December 4, 1982, have been satisfactorily resolved.

The staff is awaiting confirmation from Region IV stating that the applicant has completed construction and pre-operational testing in substantial agreement with documented commitments and regulatory requirements, and that no item remains which should preclude issuance of a low power operating license. The staff will not consider issuance of the license until that confirmation is received.

With this and the previous points in mind, the staff anticipates the issuance of a license to Louisiana Power & Light Company to operate the Waterford 3 plant up to 5% of rated power in about a week.

Original Signed By:

Darrell G. Eisenhut, Director
Division of Licensing
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

cc: EDO
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