UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
REGION IV
611 RYAN PLAZA DRIVE, SUITE 1000
ARLINGTON, TEXAS 76011

Docket No. 50-298
License No. DPR-46
EA 92-43

Nebraska Public Power District
ATTN: Guy R. Horn, Nuclear Power
Group Manager
P.O. Box 499
Columbus, Nebraska 68602-0499

Gentlemen:

SUBJECT: NRC INSPECTION REPORT 50-298/92-04

Attached is a corrected copy of page 2 of NRC letter dated May 21, 1992, which transmitted the enforcement action associated with NRC Inspection Report 50-298/92-04. Page 2 of the original letter reflected an incorrect statement. Please insert the corrected page with your original letter.

Sincerely,

A. Bill Beach, Director
Division of Reactor Projects

Attachment: As stated

cc w/Attachment: (see next page)

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1/0

Nebraska Public Power District
ATTN: G. D. Watson, General Counsel
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Columbus, Nebraska 68602-0499

Cooper Nuclear Station
ATTN: John M. Meacham, Division
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Nebraska Department of Environmental
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ATTN: Randolph Wood, Director
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Lincoln, Nebraska 68509-8922

Nemaha County Board of Commissioners
ATTN: Larry Bohlken, Chairman
Nemaha County Courthouse
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Auburn, Nebraska 68305

Nebraska Department of Health
ATTN: Harold Borchert, Director
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Kansas Radiation Control Program Director

number of cells in both station 250-volt batteries. Monitoring of the potentially degraded cells of both 250-volt batteries was implemented on January 8, 1992. Nevertheless, a written operability determination for the battery with the degraded cell was not performed until January 15, 1992. The licensee declared the 1A 250-battery inoperable after discussing the condition with the NRC on February 7, 1992. Plant operation continued until February 10, 1992, when a similar degradation was recognized on the 1B 250-volt battery, and the plant was shut down.

In Licensee Event Report 92-003, which NPPD submitted to NRC on March 9, 1992, NPPD said that the TS Limiting Condition for Operation (LCO) was not entered when the degraded cell was first detected "due to information in the Technical Specification Bases section which was interpreted to allow an evaluation of the effect of the individual cell's condition on overall battery operability."

NRC has concluded, based on the wording of the CNS TS, that there was not a legally enforceable regulatory requirement to enter the battery LCO action statement because an individual battery cell failed its TS surveillance test. Thus, the applicable CNS TS action statement was not violated. A TS change request was submitted to the NRC that addressed the required actions upon identifying battery cells that do not satisfy the surveillance test acceptance criteria.

NRC, however, views NPPD's actions upon discovery of the degraded battery cell to monitor the cell voltage on a more frequent basis as inadequate in that the identification of a degraded cell on the 1B 250-volt battery on February 5, 1992, was not brought to management's attention until February 10, 1992. In addition, we are particularly concerned that your corrective action program failed to recognize that such corrective actions were outside the battery inspection and testing requirements described in the Updated Safety Analysis Report. Section VIII-6.5 commits to the IEEE 450-1987 standard that would require immediate corrective actions when cell voltage was measured below 2.13 volts. In this event, no action was taken to restore cell voltage or to remove the affected cell from service. Furthermore, the uncorrected condition of copper contamination in a significant number of battery cells represented an unanalyzed common-mode failure mechanism that caused the failure of a cell in both station 250-volt batteries to meet TS minimum individual cell voltage requirements and was of concern to NRC.

NPPD's after-the-fact testing of degraded cells concluded that the battery would have performed its intended function with up to five cells removed from service. Although no action was taken to remove the degraded cells from service and although a significant

bcc distrib. by RIV:

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