



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

REGION III
801 WARRENVILLE ROAD
LISLE, ILLINOIS 60532-4351

March 28, 1996

"Public"

Mr. E. Watzl, Vice President
Nuclear Generation
Northern States Power Company
414 Nicollet Mall
Minneapolis, MN 55401

Dear Mr. Watzl:

Enclosed for your review is the SALP 12 Report for Prairie Island Nuclear Generating Plant covering the period July 24, 1994, through February 17, 1996. This report will be discussed with you at a public meeting to be held at the Prairie Island Training Center at 9 a.m. on April 17, 1996. During this meeting you are encouraged to discuss any comments you may have regarding our report.

In accordance with NRC policy, I have reviewed the SALP Board assessment and concur with its ratings. The areas of operations, maintenance, and plant support were rated Category 1. The engineering area was rated Category 2. The details of our assessment are provided in the enclosed report. It is my view that conduct of nuclear activities at Prairie Island was excellent overall, and was properly focused on nuclear safety.

Prairie Island's performance was characterized by strong management involvement and a conservative approach to operations. Interdepartmental communications, teamwork, and work controls were strong. These attributes resulted in excellent material condition and operating performance. In addition, aggressive and effective self-assessments conducted by the line organization provided insight into the facility and organization and identified potential deficiencies. One example was the significant investment in your self-assessment of the cooling water system, which involved considerable research of the design basis followed by a detailed assessment of the performance of the system. The result was an excellent understanding of the design basis, operational performance, and deficiencies associated with the system.

Although not indicative of the overall performance, there was evidence of problems associated with the understanding and implementation of the safety evaluation process. Similarly, while operational performance was excellent during normal operation and transient conditions, several errors involving infrequent operations occurred near the end of the assessment period. These issues indicate weaknesses exist that could become significant if not properly corrected. Additional focus and attention by your staff may be necessary to understand and correct their root causes.

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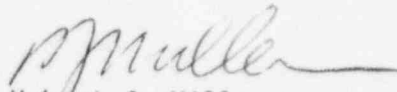
E. Watzl

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In accordance with Section 2.790 of the NRC's "Rules of Practice," Part 2, Title 10, Code of Federal Regulations, a copy of this letter, the SALP report, and your response to this letter will be placed in the NRC's Public Document Room.

Should you have any questions concerning the SALP report, we would be pleased to discuss them with you. While no written response is required, if you wish, you may provide written comments within 30 days of the SALP meeting.

Sincerely,



Hubert J. Miller
Regional Administrator

Docket No. 50-282

Docket No. 50-306

Enclosure: SALP 12

Report No. 50-282/306-96001

cc w/encl: Plant Manager, Prairie Island
John W. Ferman, Ph.D.,
Nuclear Engineer, MPCA
State Liaison Officer, State
of Minnesota
State Liaison Officer, State
of Wisconsin
Tribal Council
Prairie Island Dakota Community
INPO

Chairman Jackson
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A. C. Thadani, Associate Director for Inspection and Technical
Assessment, NRR
J. W. Roe, Director, Division of Reactor Projects III/IV, NRR
D. L. Gamberoni, SALP Program Manager, NRR (2 copies)
DRP Division Directors, All Regions
C. D. Pederson, RIII
G. E. Grant, RIII
R. J. Caniano, RIII
L. Cox, RIII
DRP Technical Assistant, RIII

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/s/Hubert J. Miller

Hubert J. Miller
Regional Administrator

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DRP Technical Assistant, RIII

(See attached continued distribution)

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