

DCS

OCT. 16 1992

Docket No. 50-57

Dr. D. W. Rennie  
Vice Provost for Research and  
Graduate Studies  
State University of New York at Buffalo  
Capen Hall  
Amherst, New York 14260

Dear Dr. Rennie:

Subject: Inspection No. 50-57/92-03

An announced, reactive inspection was conducted by Messrs. Thomas L. Dragoun and James Trapp of this office on September 8 and 9, 1992 of the circumstances related to the failure of the natural circulation flapper valve to open after a reactor shutdown occurred due to the loss of all electrical power at the facility. Discussions of our findings were held by Messrs. Dragoun and Trapp with Mr. Louis Henry and other members of your staff at the conclusion of this inspection.

The preliminary assessment by facility management and the Nuclear Safety Committee was that, during replacement of the flapper during the recent extended outage, the new flapper was installed a few degrees closer to a vertical position than was previously the case. This created a critical balance condition such that the flapper did not have a positive opening torque from gravity, and thus did not swing to the intended open position when the primary pump stopped on loss of electrical power on September 2, 1992. The failure of the valve to operate as intended was identified by the licensee staff within minutes of the loss of power, and no damage to the core resulted from the incident. The inspectors concluded that the safety significance of the failure of the valve to open was minimal, that the licensee's actions in response to the incident were appropriate, and that the short term and long term corrective actions proposed to prevent recurrence appear to be appropriate, as discussed in the enclosed inspection report.

The inspectors concluded that this event was handled by your staff in a safe manner. Within the scope of this review, no safety concerns or violations of regulatory requirements were observed. No reply to this letter is required.

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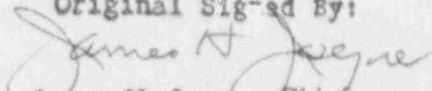
State University of New York  
at Buffalo

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Your cooperation with us is appreciated.

Sincerely,

Original Signed By:



James H. Joyner, Chief  
Facilities Radiological Safety  
and Safeguards Branch  
Division of Radiation Safety  
and Safeguards

Enclosure: NRC Region I Inspection Report No. 50-57/92-03

cc w/encl:

L. G. Henry, Director  
M. A. Pierro, Radiation Safety Officer  
Dr. William Vernetson, TRTR  
K. Abraham, PAO (2)  
Public Document Room (PDR)  
Local Public Document Room (LPDR)  
Nuclear Safety Information Center (NSIC)  
State of New York

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bcc w/encl:

Region I Docket Room (with concurrences)

T. W. Dragoun, DRSS

S. Weiss, NPR (OWFN 10D21)

J. Roth, DRSS

V. McCree, OEDO

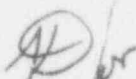
J. Caldwell, NRR/LOLB (OWFN 10 D22)



DRSS:RI

Dragoun

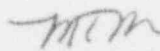
10/6/92



DRS:RI

Trapp

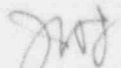
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DRSS:RI

Miller

10/6/92



DRSS:RI

Joyner

10/6/92

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