

Public

IE-01

January 28, 1997

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

SUBJECT: NRC INSPECTION REPORT NO. 50-282/96016, 50-306/96016

Dear Mr. Watzl:

On January 7, 1997, the NRC completed an inspection at your Prairie Island Nuclear Generating Plant. The enclosed report presents the results of that inspection.

During the 7-week period covered by this inspection, your conduct of activities at the Prairie Island facilities was generally acceptable. However, a concern with operator performance during surveillance activities was identified in the three most recent resident inspector reports. During this report period an additional operator error during surveillance activities was identified. Your staff also identified a case where operators had performed an incorrect surveillance test. Both of these errors were due to inadequate self-checking by licensed operators. In addition, the NRC identified that many of your surveillance procedures were not written in the format specified by your writer's guide. We are concerned that this could lead to additional errors during performance.

An inadvertent boron dilution of the reactor coolant system occurred during recovery from a maintenance activity due to an incorrectly specified valve position. While operators detected the dilution in a timely manner, the incorrect valve position had not been identified by two licensed operators during their reviews of the documentation prior to returning the letdown purification system to service. This was another example of inadequate self-checking similar to the surveillance errors discussed above.

We understand that corrective actions for the errors discussed above have been initiated in response to the cited violation in our last report and recent Licensee Event Reports. Therefore we elected to provide you a reasonable time for corrective action implementation before re-citing similar events involving operator errors, and the issues discussed above were considered non-cited violations. However, we remain concerned with weaknesses in operator performance and will closely monitor the effectiveness of those actions.

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In accordance with 10 CFR 2.790 of the NRC's "Rules of Practice," a copy of this letter and its enclosures will be placed in the NRC Public Document Room (PDR).

Sincerely,

/s/ J. A. Grobe for
J. L. Caldwell, Director
Division of Reactor Projects

Docket Nos.: 50-282, 50-306
License Nos: DPR-42, DPR-60

Enclosure: Inspection Report 50-282/96016, 50-308/96016

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

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