

May 19, 1997

Mr. Michael B. Roche  
Vice President and Director  
GPU Nuclear Incorporated  
Oyster Creek Nuclear Generating Station  
P.O. Box 388  
Forked River, New Jersey 08731

SUBJECT: NRC INTEGRATED INSPECTION REPORT NO. 50-219/97-02, NOTICE OF VIOLATION

Dear Mr. Roche:

On April 13, 1997, the NRC completed an integrated inspection at your Oyster Creek reactor facility. The enclosed report presents the results of that inspection.

During the seven-week period covered by this inspection period, your conduct of activities at the Oyster Creek facility was generally characterized by safety-conscious operations, sound engineering and maintenance practices, and careful radiological work controls.

One violation of NRC requirements involving an incomplete 10 CFR 50.59 analysis to support removal of the two radiation detectors from the isolation condenser vents was identified. We note that there are recent similar examples of inadequate 10 CFR 50.59 analyses. The violation is cited in the enclosed Notice of Violation and the circumstances surrounding it are described in detail in the subject inspection report. Notwithstanding your continuing efforts to improve performance in the area of safety evaluations and safety determinations, as noted in the enclosed report, we remain concerned with historical plant and procedure modifications as related to fully addressing and maintaining the current design and licensing bases of the facility.

Please note that you are required to respond to this letter and should follow the instructions specified in the enclosed Notice when preparing your response. The NRC will use your response, in part, to determine whether further enforcement action is necessary to ensure compliance with regulatory requirements.

In addition, several apparent violations were identified and are being considered for escalated enforcement actions in accordance with the "General Statement of Policy and Procedure for NRC Enforcement Actions" (Enforcement Policy), NUREG-1600. Since the Fall of 1996, several issues and events have occurred due to weaknesses in overall system or component configuration control weakness. These include the September 17-18, 1996, 133,000 gallon discharge of slightly contaminated water and the January 25, 1997, spill of control rod drive system water in the reactor building. Your staff similarly identified



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numerous problems (since July, 1995) via the deviation reporting system as related to the switching and tagging program. Also, during this inspection period, additional events have occurred that are likewise attributed to configuration control weaknesses. These recent events included 1) inadvertently establishing a valve lineup that would have degraded the pressure-suppression capability of the suppression pool (torus) in the event of a design basis accident, 2) inappropriately re-positioning a heating boiler damper that had been tagged closed for maintenance, and 3) mis-calibrating the two radiation monitors that automatically initiate the standby gas treatment system. Although members of your staff demonstrated attentiveness in identifying and documenting these issues, it appears that your response, evaluation, and corrective efforts to date have not focused on the broader configuration control issues. Finally, the numerous recent examples of deficient 10 CFR 50.59 safety evaluations and safety determinations are also configuration control weaknesses.

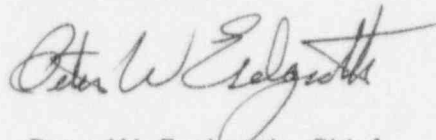
The NRC is concerned with continuing difficulties in preventing configuration control related problems. No Notice of Violation is presently being issued for these apparent violations as we are continuing to evaluate the enforcement aspects of these findings. In addition, please be advised that the number and characterization of apparent violations as described in the enclosed inspection report may change as a result of further NRC review.

You will be advised by separate correspondence of further actions related to the apparent violations.

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).

We appreciate your cooperation.

Sincerely,



Peter W. Eselgroth, Chief  
Projects Branch 7  
Division of Reactor Projects

Docket/License: 50-219/DPR-16  
72-1004

Enclosures:

1. Notice of Violation
2. NRC Inspection Report No. 50-219/97-02

cc w/encl:

G. Busch, Manager, Site Regulatory Affairs, Oyster Creek  
M. Laggart, Manager, Corporate Regulatory Affairs  
State of New Jersey

Mr. Michael B. Roche

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