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UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

February 16, 1996

Dr. Donna Bush
Chief, Drug Testing Section
Division of Workplace Programs
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration
5600 Fishers Lane (Room 13-A-54)
Rockville, Maryland 20857

Dear Dr. Bush:

Forwarded for your action in accordance with Section 2.8(e) of Appendix A to 10 CFR Part 26 is a report (enclosure 1) of unsatisfactory testing results involving an HHS-certified testing laboratory.

New York Power Authority (NYPA) letter of January 15, 1996, reported a false negative blind performance test result for amphetamine (specimen number T21922) by Corning MetPath Clinical Laboratories. The MetPath EMIT screening was positive. The MetPath GC/MS confirmation test was positive at 300 ng/ml amphetamine and 1614 ng/ml methamphetamine, but an interfering agent with qualifying ions was found. MetPath repeated the GC/MS test, found the same concentrations and interfering agent, and reported the sample as negative. MetPath could not identify or eliminate the interfering agent. The sample was supplied by Bensinger, DuPont, and Associates (BDA) at 310 ng/ml amphetamine and 1600 ng/ml methamphetamine.

At NYPA's request, MetPath sent an aliquot of the sample to LabCorp, another HHS-certified lab. The LabCorp GC/MS test was positive for amphetamine and methamphetamine, within target levels, and with no indication of an interfering agent.

In a previous letter (December 14, 1995), NYPA reported a similar false negative test by MetPath (specimen number T46414). The EMIT screen had been positive, and the GC/MS test had found 311 ng/ml amphetamine and 1554 ng/ml methamphetamine - and an interfering agent with qualifying ions. MetPath repeated the GC/MS test and got similar results, including the interfering agent. MetPath then submitted a negative report because of the unknown interfering agent. As above, this sample was supplied by BDA at 310 ng/ml amphetamine and 1600 ng/ml methamphetamine. The December 14, 1995, NYPA report was forwarded to your office by NRC letter of January 26, 1996.

The licensee's Medical Review Officer is working with MetPath and the sample supplier (BDA) to review the details of these similar false negative reports and to attempt to find the source of the contamination. The licensee is also initiating new contracts with both an alternate sample supplier and an alternate HHS lab.

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If you have any questions, please call me at 301-415-2944.

Sincerely;

/ original signed by: /

Loren L. Bush
Reactor Safeguards Branch
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Enclosure:
As stated

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