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

JUN 27 1988

The Honorable John Breaux
United States Senate
Washington, D. C. 20510

Dear Senator Breaux:

I am responding to your letter dated May 23, 1988, enclosing a letter from Mr. Stephen M. Irving, an attorney in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Mr. Irving requested that the Commission take immediate action to correct two conditions at the River Bend Station. Mr. Irving expressed concern regarding the necessity for manually activating the prompt notification system and the potential for the release of contaminated water from the condensate storage tank to East and West Creeks, Grants Bayou, and ultimately to the Mississippi River.

Gulf States Utilities Company (GSU), the licensee for the River Bend Station (RBS), is taking steps to improve the prompt notification system to reduce the inadvertent actuation of sirens in the Parishes that are participants in the emergency plan. Until recently, the emergency preparedness computer at River Bend Station was normally in the automatic mode. In this mode all the sirens in a Parish could be manually activated without the concurrence of the RBS plant staff by pressing a button in the Parish emergency operations center (EOC). This action sends a radio signal from the Parish transmitter to the siren computer transceiver located at the River Bend Station Emergency Operations Facility (EOF). In turn, the transceiver converted and transmitted the signal to activate the sirens in the Parish. This mode of operation was changed to minimize siren activations caused by spurious radiofrequency signals.

The computer transceiver at the EOF, now in standby mode, requires the concurrence of the RBS staff to switch it to automatic mode. Temporarily, this switching is done manually in the EOF by pressing a button. After declaring a General Emergency, the RBS Emergency Director will notify the emergency preparedness staff to place the computer in the automatic mode. The emergency preparedness staff is located in the same EOF building during normal shifts. During off-shifts, a security guard stationed in the same building will be notified by radio or telephone to do the same. We understand that both the emergency staff and the security guards have received hands-on training and have demonstrated their proficiency during drills.

By October 1988, GSU intends to install remote control hardware that will enable the Emergency Director in the Control Room to switch from standby to automatic mode. GSU had coordinated the above changes with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Parishes, and the State of Louisiana.

Other modifications that have been, or will be completed by October 1988 are: Improved shielding and grounding of the electronic equipment at the Parish EOCs; modification for the 92 sirens to reduce their susceptibility to spurious radiofrequency signals; installation of an upgraded computer with the capability to provide a fully redundant siren control and monitoring system; and complete testing of the associated hardware which will provide for "safe" failure modes to prevent inadvertent siren activation.

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The NRC staff concluded that these corrective actions should reduce the probability of spurious siren activations while providing an acceptable level of emergency notification.

The effects of the failure of the condensate storage tank and release of its contents was considered by the NRC staff during the review of GSU's application for an operating license for River Bend Station, Unit 1. The staff's evaluation is contained in Section 15.7.3, Liquid Tank Failure Accident, Safety Evaluation Report related to the operation of River Bend Station, NUREG-0989, May 1984. The staff conducted an independent evaluation of the consequences of component failures for radioactive-liquid-waste-components located outside the reactor containment building that could result in releases of liquid containing radioactive materials to the environs. The staff considered failure of the condensate storage tank directly after refueling, when it would contain the highest radionuclide inventory. This tank is outside and unprotected by a spill basin; its rupture would release 600,000 gallons onto the ground. The staff concluded that the radionuclide concentrations in the tank are sufficiently low so that when the high water absorption of the soil (which reduces the amount of water entering the Mississippi River) and the high dilution capability of the Mississippi River are taken into account, the resulting radionuclide concentrations at the nearest unrestricted drinking water source will be less than the 10 CFR Part 20 limits. Accordingly, the condensate storage tank was considered acceptable.

In view of the above discussion, Mr. Irving's concerns have been addressed and no additional action beyond that which is ongoing is deemed necessary. Mr. Irving had further requested access to information produced in connection with the complaint. Enclosed is a recent NRC inspection report that addresses inadvertent actuation of emergency sirens.

Sincerely,

Victor Stello, Jr.
Executive Director
for Operations

Enclosure:
As stated

DISTRIBUTION w/o enclosure:

Docket File	NRC PDR w/cy of incoming	Local PDR w/cy of incoming
EDO # 003769	EDO Reading	T. Murley/J. Sniezek
F. Miraglia	PD4 Reading	D. Crutchfield
L. Rubenstein	OGC-Rockville	GPA/CA
V. Stello	D. Mossburg, PMAS (EDO# 003769) w/cy of incoming	
P. Shea	W. Paulsonw/cy of incoming	J. Calvo
P. Noonan	PD4 Green Ticket File	

*See previous concurrences

PDIV:LA*	PDIV:PM*	REGIV*	PDIV:D*	TECH ED*	OGC*	DRSP:D
PNoonan	WPaulson:kb	Everett	JCalvo		EShoemaker	DCrutchfield
06/14/88	06/10/88	06/15/88	06/15/88	06/15/88	06/17/88	06/20/88

ADR4	DDONRR	DONRR	ADR4*	EDO
FMiraglia	JSniezek	TMurley	LRubenstein	VStello
06/20/88	06/ /88	06/ /88	06/15/88	06/ /88

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In view of the above discussion, Mr. Irving's concerns have been addressed and no additional action beyond that which is ongoing is deemed necessary. Mr. Irving had further requested, ~~under the Freedom of Information Act,~~ access to information produced in connection with the complaint. ~~This letter and Mr. Irving's request will now be processed in accordance with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act.~~ The staff letter and/or documentation was produced is enclosed.

There was no such correspondence produced.

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Executive Director
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By phone P.E Hall to EBT.

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The NRC staff finds that the above corrective actions should reduce the inadvertent siren activations and will provide an acceptable level of emergency notification.

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