

50-285

JUL 8 1988

Mr. F. M. Peterson
President
Omaha Public Power District
1623 Harney Street
Omaha, Nebraska 68102

Dear Mr. Peterson:

On June 28 and 29, 1988, NRC senior managers met to review the performance of operating nuclear power plants licensed by the NRC. These meetings are conducted biannually to focus NRC resources on those plants and issues of greatest safety significance. At this meeting, the Fort Calhoun facility was categorized as requiring close monitoring. Plants in this category have been identified as having weaknesses that warrant increased NRC attention from both headquarters and the regional office.

A summary of NRC discussions held relating to Fort Calhoun is provided below:

Recent plant problems and NRC inspection findings have highlighted significant weaknesses in several areas at Fort Calhoun. NRC staff followup of the licensee's actions in response to nonroutine events and technical challenges has identified concerns about the depth of the plant support staff and the overall engineering capability of the organization particularly when stressed by complex events. In addition, a joint region and headquarters team inspection of the Fort Calhoun radiological controls program identified major programmatic and implementation weaknesses. Weaknesses have also been identified in the licensed operator requalification program. In response to these identified weaknesses, the licensee continues to make various organizational and programmatic changes. Stone and Webster was contracted by the licensee to perform an in-depth management assessment of the OPPD nuclear organization. The NRC staff was briefed by the licensee and Stone and Webster on their findings in June. In August, licensee management will provide the staff with specific corrective actions for each of the findings. Both headquarters and Region IV will provide close monitoring of licensee performance during implementation of any proposed changes. Despite Fort Calhoun's superior operating record (having recently established a new operating record for Combustion Engineering plants), the NRC staff considers licensee performance needs improvement regarding the ability of the licensee to respond appropriately to nonroutine challenges. The weaknesses identified warrant increased NRC attention from both headquarters and the Region IV offices.

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Mr. F. M. Peterson

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An NRC Commission meeting open to the public has been scheduled for July 13, 1988, to review the results of the latest meeting of NRC managers. Mr. Robert D. Martin, the Region IV Administrator, has discussed the basis for our conclusions with regard to the Fort Calhoun facility with members of your staff.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, do not hesitate to call me.

Sincerely,

Original signed by
Victor Stello

Victor Stello, Jr.
Executive Director
for Operations

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