



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

June 16, 1988

The Honorable Paul S. Sarbanes
United States Senate
Washington, D. C. 20510

Dear Senator Sarbanes:

On May 18, 1988, you referred the concerns of Ms. Nancy Williams about the licensing of the South Texas Nuclear Plant (STNP). She noted that a large number of allegations concerning the safe operation of STNP have been made by more than 50 workers involved in the construction of the plant. She further stated that, although a number of these allegations were recently reviewed, the vast majority remain unaddressed by the NRC.

It appears that the allegations to which she refers were those provided to the NRC by the Government Accountability Project (GAP). The staff's review and disposition of the allegations was reported in the "NRC Safety Significance Assessment Team Report on allegations related to the South Texas Project, Units 1 and 2," NUREG-1306, a copy of which is enclosed.

In summary, a Safety Significance Assessment (SSAT) was assembled to specifically investigate the allegations. A review of GAP's files identified approximately 700 allegations. Each allegation was reviewed and evaluated for appropriate disposition. The SSAT determined that 120 of the 700 allegations were repetitious, 240 were considered as either harassment/intimidation or as wrongdoing, and 140 more were not safety-related.

The SSAT reviewed all 213 allegations in detail and subsequently placed allegations in categories on the basis of the discipline, equipment, and shared characteristics, (e.g., mechanical valves/installation; electrical-splices/Reychem). From these categories of allegations, the SSAT identified for onsite inspection those allegations that were representative of the technical concerns conveyed by the allegers and enveloped the 213 allegations either specifically or on a generic basis. Ten such allegations were identified and designated as primary allegations. In addition, 61 secondary allegations were selected that conveyed concerns similar to those of the primary allegation.

She also expressed concern that the staff is not even considering the remaining allegations. Of the allegations remaining after identification of the 71, 119 were closed out because they were found to be duplicates of the allegations selected for inspection, or related to allegations that were already being covered by the SSAT inspection. Of the 23 remaining allegations, 4 were found to be duplicated. The remaining 19 lacked specificity to determine whether they can be enveloped by the inspection performed by SSAT. However, the SSAT determined that the subject matter conveyed by the remaining 19 allegations involved the

implementation of QA criteria which were evaluated by SSAT as part of its overall review of the effectiveness of the STP Quality Assurance Program and found to be acceptable. The SSAT, therefore, concluded that the remaining 19 allegations could not be of immediate safety significance, and are considered closed.

With respect to the sampling size the allegations provided to the SSAT by GAP generally had a common shortcoming; i.e., the allegers were unable to provide specifics with respect to location of the alleged unacceptable conditions. Absent any specifics, the SSAT conducted a generic review of the allegations. This included selecting systems and components at random and inspecting them for any indications of the alleged deficiencies. In each of the cases, the SSAT was unable to find any of the alleged deficiencies. The absence of any findings, when viewed in light of the number of items inspected, provided an acceptable basis for concluding that there were no pervasive deficiencies within the systems/components inspected.

Prior to the STP site visit, the SSAT undertook an extensive effort to categorize the allegations and identify those that could be safety related. The SSAT was at the STP site from January 18 through January 22, 1988, or 4.5 calendar days. In actuality, the SSAT worked extremely long hours, and put in the equivalent of eight work days on site. After performing the onsite inspection, the SSAT spent significantly more time reviewing and evaluating inspection results and supporting data. The overall effort of the SSAT is estimated to have consumed 2,910 person-hours. On this basis, I believe that the totality of effort expended to review the allegations was sufficient to thoroughly address the concerns represented by the allegations.

There were 240 allegations of intimidation, harassment and wrongdoing. These were referred to the NRC Office of Investigation (OI) for review. The solution of these allegations will be accomplished by OI after GAP enables interviews with the allegers to take place. Interviews are a necessary part of the investigation and are intended to provide specificity to the allegations.

On March 21, 1988, the Commission met to discuss the licensing of STNP. An important part of that discussion dealt with the allegations and the SSAT review of them. We concluded that the allegations identified no substantive safety issue that would warrant delay in the licensing of STNP. The Commission voted unanimously to authorize a full power license for STNP.

I hope that this summary information is beneficial to you. As mentioned earlier, I have enclosed a copy of NUREG-1306 which gives the details about the NRC review of the allegations.

Sincerely,
Orignally signed by
Victor Stello

Victor Stello, Jr.
Executive Director
for Operations

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