

February 25, 1999

Mr. J. E. Cross
President
Generation Group
Duquesne Light Company
Post Office Box 4
Shippingport, Pennsylvania 15077

SUBJECT: NRC INSPECTION REPORT 50-334/98-11, 50-412/98-11 AND NOTICE OF VIOLATION

Dear Mr. Cross:

The NRC conducted an inspection of the Beaver Valley Power Station facilities from December 27, 1998 to February 6, 1999. The enclosed report presents the results of that inspection.

During the 6-week period covered by this inspection period, your conduct of activities at the Beaver Valley Power Station facilities was characterized by an appropriate concern for reactor safety, but inconsistent performance. On January 23, operators alertly initiated a manual Unit 1 reactor trip, upon sensing an uncontrolled reduction of main condenser vacuum. Poor procedures and human performance weaknesses caused the uncontrolled reduction of vacuum which challenged the plant and control room operators. Post trip reviews were comprehensive, but implementation of corrective actions to preclude recurrence was initially incomplete. Procedure quality continues to challenge your organization as demonstrated by the reactor trip and a turbine trip during the subsequent unit restart. The Corrective Action Review Board notably improved the quality of your overall corrective action program, yet the condition report investigation rejection rate indicated a continued performance weakness. Maintenance activities were generally well performed and your maintenance rule program periodic assessment was a strength. Notwithstanding, post maintenance testing deficiencies continued.

Based on the results of this inspection, the NRC has determined that a violation of NRC requirements occurred. This violation is cited in the enclosed Notice of Violation (Notice) and the circumstances surrounding the violation are described in detail in the subject inspection report. This NRC identified violation is of concern because it represents a station-wide breakdown of your corrective action program in resolving a technical specification testing concern. Although your quality services unit engineers identified a meteorological monitoring instrumentation calibration issue in November 1998, over two months later your organization had not properly addressed operability concerns, reportability, or actions to preclude recurrence.

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.

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Mr. J. E. Cross
Beaver Valley Power Station

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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).

Sincerely,

Original Signed By:

Neil S. Perry, Acting Chief
Reactor Projects Branch No. 7
Division of Reactor Projects

Docket Nos. : 50-334, 50-412
License Nos.: DPR-66, NPF-73

Enclosures:

1. Notice of Violation
2. Inspection Report 50-334/98-11, 50-412/98-11

cc w/encls:

S. Jain, Senior Vice President, Nuclear Services Group
K. Ostrowski, Vice President, Nuclear Operations Group and Plant Manager
B. Tuite, General Manager, Nuclear Operations Unit
W. Kline, Manager, Nuclear Engineering Department
M. Pearson, Manager, Quality Services Unit
M. Ackerman, Manager, Safety & Licensing Department
J. Macdonald, Manager, System and Performance Engineering
J. A. Hultz, Manager, Projects and Support Services, FirstEnergy
M. Clancy, Mayor, Shippingport, PA
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
State of Ohio
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Mr. J. E. Cross
Beaver Valley Power Station

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