

August 19, 1999

EA 99-198

Mr. J. Langenbach
Vice President and Director
GPU Nuclear, Inc.
Three Mile Island Nuclear Station
P. O. Box 480
Middletown, Pennsylvania 17057-0480

SUBJECT: NRC INTEGRATED INSPECTION REPORT NO. 50-289/99-04 AND EXERCISE
OF ENFORCEMENT DISCRETION

Dear Mr. Langenbach:

On July 17, 1999, the NRC completed an integrated inspection at your Three Mile Island Unit 1 reactor facility. The enclosed report presents the results of that inspection which the resident inspectors discussed with you and your staff during the July 21, 1999, exit meeting.

Your staff operated the unit safely throughout the inspection period. Conduct of routine control room operations continued to be a strength. Operators reacted appropriately, and plant equipment responded, as designed, to the loss of the B auxiliary transformer. The quality of your fire protection program was found to be good.

We have completed our review of the 2B emergency feedwater (EFW) pump bearing failure identified by your staff in May 1999. The bearing failure was documented in NRC inspection report 50-289/99-03, dated June 29, 1999. GPUN and the NRC determined that the 2B EFW pump was unavailable to perform its safety function, due to the failed bearing, for longer than the TS allowed out of service time of 72 hours. The 2B EFW pump was inoperable from the time of the last automatic actuation start test on March 27, 1999, or earlier, until the time of discovery of the failed bearing on May 10, 1999. The NRC staff found that you could not have reasonably predicted the failure of the pump bearing based on the results of past surveillance testing and that the cause of the failure was not indicative of your current performance in the conduct of maintenance activities. Further, your corrective actions for this event were commensurate with the safety significance of the emergency feedwater system. Accordingly, in consultation with the Regional Administrator, NRC Region 1, and the Director, NRC Office of Enforcement, I have been authorized to not issue a Notice of Violation and not propose a civil penalty for this Severity Level III violation in accordance with the provisions provided in Section VII.B.6 of the Enforcement Policy.

Based on the results of this inspection, the NRC has determined that two Severity Level IV violations of NRC requirements occurred which you identified. These violations are being treated as Non-Cited Violations (NCVs), consistent with Appendix C of the Enforcement Policy. The NCV's involved: 1) inability of the control building emergency ventilation system to maintain

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the control room at a positive pressure in the event of a damper failure, and 2) the existence of an open flood path between the turbine building and the control building. These NCVs are described further in the subject inspection report. If you contest the violations or severity level of these NCVs, you should provide a response within 30 days of the date of this inspection report, with the basis for your denial, to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, ATTN: Document Control Desk, Washington DC 20555-0001; with copies to the Regional Administrator, Region I; the Director, Office of Enforcement, United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001; and the NRC Resident Inspector at the Three Mile Island Unit 1 reactor facility.

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).

No reply to this letter is necessary. We appreciate your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Original Signed By:

Richard V. Crlenjak, Deputy Director
Division of Reactor Projects

Docket No.: 50-289

Enclosure: NRC Inspection Report No. 50-289/99-04

cc w/encl:

M. J. Ross, Director, Operations and Maintenance

D. Smith, PDMS Manager

M. Laggart, Manager, Licensing and Vendor Audits

E. Fuhrer, Manager, Nuclear Safety and Licensing

E. L. Blake, Shaw, Pittman, Potts and Trowbridge (Legal Counsel for GPUN)

TMI-Alert (TMIA)

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

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per telecon
w/ J. Connelly
8/17/99