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UNITED STATES  
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

April 21, 1998

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Mr. John Beck, President  
Little Harbor Consultants, Inc.  
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P.O. Box 0630  
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SUBJECT: LITTLE HARBOR CONSULTANTS, INC. OVERSIGHT OF NNECO  
PROGRAMS FOR HANDLING EMPLOYEE CONCERNS (EVALUATION  
REPORT NOS. 50-245/98-210, 50-336/98-210, 50-423/98-210)

Dear Mr. Beck:

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission's (NRC's) October 24, 1996, Order directed the licensee to retain an independent, third-party, to oversee Northeast Nuclear Energy Company's (NNECO's) implementation of its comprehensive plan to improve processes and programs for handling employee safety concerns. Following NRC's approval of Little Harbor Consultants, Inc. (LHC) as the third-party organization, NRC staff has conducted a number of activities related to the evaluation of LHC's oversight responsibility including participation in periodic meetings between LHC and NNECO, onsite monitoring of LHC implementation of its Oversight Plan, and review of LHC docketed information. During the period December 8-12, 1997 and January 5-9, 1998, a team from the NRC's Special Projects Office, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation, in accordance with guidelines outlined in SECY-97-003, "Millstone Restart Review Process," performed an evaluation of the Employee Concerns Program and safety-conscious work environment at Millstone. While onsite for its evaluation, the team also evaluated LHC's oversight activities. The enclosed report presents the results of these evaluations.

Overall, LHC activities were found to be effective in implementing its Oversight Plan for monitoring and overseeing NNECO's efforts to correct and prevent the repetition of past failures in management processes and procedures for handling safety issues raised by employees, and in ensuring that employees who raise safety concerns are not discriminated against. Two weaknesses were identified: one concerned the level of detail provided in LHC's first quarterly report and the second involved the tracking of NNECO's responses to LHC's recommendations. Since the team's evaluation, LHC addressed both these weaknesses.

The team's evaluation of the Millstone Employee Concerns Program and the safety-conscious work environment are discussed in a separate report.

In accordance with Title 10 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Section 2.790(a), a copy of this letter and the enclosure will be placed in the NRC Public Document Room.

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If you have any questions concerning the enclosed evaluation report, please contact Helen N. Pastis at 301 415-1261.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Phillip F. McKee".

Phillip F. McKee  
Deputy Director for Licensing  
Special Projects Office  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket Nos. 50-245, 50-336, and 50-423

Enclosure: Evaluation Report 98-210

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