



UNITED STATES  
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON REACTOR SAFEGUARDS  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20555

April 16, 1981

The Honorable Joseph M. Hendrie  
Chairman  
U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
Washington, DC 20555

SUBJECT: REPORT ON LA SALLE COUNTY STATION UNITS 1 AND 2

Dear Dr. Hendrie:

During its 252nd meeting, the ACRS completed its review of the application of the Commonwealth Edison Company (Applicant) for a license to operate the La Salle County Station Units 1 and 2. A subcommittee meeting was held in Morris, Illinois on April 3-4, 1981 to consider this project. A tour of the facility was made by members of the Subcommittee on April 3, 1981. During its review, the Committee had the benefit of discussions with representatives of the Applicant and the NRC Staff. The Committee also had the benefit of the documents listed. The Committee reported on the construction permit application for this plant in a letter to AEC Chairman James R. Schlesinger dated December 17, 1971.

The La Salle County plant is located in La Salle County, Illinois about 70 miles southwest of downtown Chicago. The nearest population center is Ottawa, Illinois about 11 miles northwest of the site.

The La Salle plant uses GE BWR-5 nuclear steam supply systems with a rated power level of 3323 MW(t) each. The La Salle plant has a Mark II pressure suppression containment with a design pressure of 45 psig. The La Salle plant is one of three plants included in the Mark II Owners Group lead plant program. The NRC Staff has concluded review of the lead plant program and has issued Supplements 1 and 2 to NUREG-0487, "Mark II Containment Lead Plant Program Load Evaluation and Acceptance Criteria," which specify generic acceptance criteria. The Staff has concluded that the La Salle facility satisfies the criteria. We concur in this finding.

The Applicant described the organization of the plant staff, including maintenance, engineering, operations, and health physics personnel. The safety review functions and training programs were also discussed. The Applicant is emphasizing plant staffing and personnel training. The Committee believes that efforts to improve staff capabilities should continue, particularly in the area of health physics.

The Applicant and the Staff have under consideration a recently issued AEOD report (Reference 4) concerning the risk potential for pipe breaks in the BWR scram system. This report is being reviewed by the NRC Staff and by a BWR Owners Group. We believe that this issue should be treated generically and need not be resolved prior to operation of the La Salle plant.

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The NRC Staff proposes to require the installation of core thermocouples in the La Salle plant as specified by Regulatory Guide 1.97, Revision 2, "Instrumentation for Light-Water-Cooled Nuclear Power Plants to Assess Plant and Environs Conditions During and Following an Accident." The Applicant has not yet agreed to this requirement. In a letter to Commissioner Gilinsky dated July 16, 1980, the Committee recommended that careful examination of the feasibility of the use of core outlet or core subassembly thermocouples, and the pros and cons of such use, be undertaken. We recommend that such a study be completed for the La Salle plant before a decision is reached on this requirement. The Committee wishes to be kept informed.

The NRC has identified a number of additional outstanding issues. We believe that these can be resolved in a manner acceptable to the NRC Staff.

The ACRS believes that if due consideration is given to the recommendations above, and subject to satisfactory completion of construction, staffing, and preoperational testing, there is reasonable assurance that La Salle County Station Units 1 and 2 can be operated at power levels up to 3323 MW(t) each without undue risk to the health and safety of the public.

Sincerely,



J. Carson Mark  
Chairman

References:

1. Commonwealth Edison Company "La Salle County Station Final Safety Analysis Report," Volumes 1-12 and Amendments 1-55.
2. U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission "Safety Evaluation Report Related to the Operation of La Salle County Station Units 1 and 2," USNRC Report NUREG-0519, dated March 1981.
3. U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Supplements 1 and 2 to NUREG-0487, "Mark II Containment Lead Plant Program Load Evaluation and Acceptance Criteria," dated September 1980 and February 1981.
4. U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission "Safety Concerns Associated With Pipe Breaks in the BWR Scram System," Office for Analysis and Evaluation of Operational Data, March 1981.