



**UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
REGION IV
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ARLINGTON, TEXAS 76011-8064**

March 4, 2002

Mr. J. V. Parrish
Chief Executive Officer
Energy Northwest
P.O. Box 968; MD 1023
Richland, Washington 99352-0968

**SUBJECT: ANNUAL ASSESSMENT - COLUMBIA GENERATING STATION
(REPORT 50-397/02-01)**

Dear Mr. Parrish:

On February 12, 2002, the NRC staff completed its end-of-cycle plant performance assessment of Columbia Generating Station. The end-of-cycle review for Columbia Generating Station involved the participation of all technical divisions in evaluating performance indicators for the most recent quarter and inspection results for the period from April 1 through December 31, 2001. The purpose of this letter is to inform you of our assessment of your safety performance during this period and our plans for future inspections at your facility. This will provide you an opportunity to prepare for these inspections and to inform us of any planned inspections which may conflict with your plant activities.

As discussed in our previous annual assessment letter, dated May 29, 2001, this inspection and assessment cycle consisted of three quarters (i.e., the second, third, and fourth quarters of Calendar Year 2001) instead of the usual four quarters. This change was implemented in order to align the inspection and assessment cycle with the calendar year beginning on January 1, 2002.

Overall, Columbia Generating Station operated in a manner that preserved public health and safety, and met all cornerstone objectives with moderate degradation in safety performance. Plant performance for the first quarter of the assessment cycle was within the Licensee Response Column of the NRC's Action Matrix. Performance for the final two quarters, however, was within the Degraded Cornerstone Column of the NRC's Action matrix. This is based on a substantially safety significant (Yellow) inspection finding in the Emergency Preparedness Cornerstone. This Yellow inspection finding involved a failure to develop and maintain plans and procedures that included a range of protective actions for members of the public located in the exclusion area. Specifically, for members of the public located inside the exclusion area during an emergency, Columbia Generating Station personnel failed to: (1) adequately develop a reliable means of notification, (2) adequately develop a means for evacuation, and (3) adequately develop means for performing the radiological monitoring and decontamination of people evacuated from the site assessments.

Additionally, the staff has identified a potential adverse trend in the crosscutting area of human performance. This substantive crosscutting issue has been identified as a result of the multiple findings related to a lack of procedural adherence by numerous Columbia personnel. The NRC

found that, over the course of the assessment period, a number of Green findings and the Yellow finding included examples of poor human performance, specifically with regard to procedural adherence. These deficiencies were noted in several areas of Columbia's organization and affected multiple cornerstones.

Immediately following the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, the NRC issued safeguards advisories recommending that nuclear power plant licensees go to the highest level of security, and all promptly did so. With continued uncertainty about the possibility of additional terrorist activities, the Nation's nuclear power plants, including Columbia Generating Station, remain at a high level of security. On February 25, 2002, the NRC issued an Order to all nuclear power plant licensees, requiring them to take certain additional interim compensatory measures to address the generalized high-level threat environment. These additional compensatory requirements will provide the NRC with reasonable assurance that public health and safety and the common defense and security continue to be adequately protected in the current generalized high-level threat environment. These requirements will remain in effect pending notification from the Commission that a significant change in the threat environment occurs or until the Commission determines that other changes are needed following a more comprehensive re-evaluation of current safeguards and security programs. To date we have monitored Energy Northwest's actions in response to the terrorist attacks through a series of audits. With the issuance of the Order, we will evaluate Energy Northwest's compliance with these interim requirements.

The enclosed inspection plan details the inspections scheduled through March 31, 2003. The plan includes a Supplemental Inspection during the week of May 13, 2002, to assess the causes associated with the corrective actions for the degraded cornerstone in emergency preparedness. In addition, inspection focus will be applied to the substantive crosscutting area of human performance. A Problem Identification and Resolution inspection has been scheduled for the fourth quarter of 2002 to follow up on the issues related to human performance. The inspection plan is provided to minimize the resource impact on your staff and to allow for scheduling conflicts and personnel availability to be resolved in advance of inspector arrival onsite. Routine resident inspections are not listed due to their ongoing and continuous nature. The last 6 months of the inspection plan is tentative and may be revised at the Midcycle Review meeting.

In accordance with 10 CFR 2.790 of the NRC's "Rules of Practice," a copy of this letter and its enclosure will be made available electronically for public inspection in the NRC Public Document Room or from the Publicly Available Records (PARS) component of NRC's document system (ADAMS). ADAMS is accessible from the NRC Web site at <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html> (the Public Electronic Reading Room).

If circumstances arise which cause us to change this inspection plan, we will contact you to discuss the change as soon as possible. Please contact William B. Jones at (817) 860-8147 with any questions you may have regarding this letter or the inspection plan.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Ellis W. Merschoff
Regional Administrator

Docket: 50-397
License: NPF-21

Enclosure:
Columbia Generating Station Inspection/ Activity Plan

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Columbia Generating Station

Inspection / Activity Plan

03/01/2002 - 03/30/2003

Unit Number	Inspection Activity	Title	No. of Staff on Site	Planned Dates Start	Planned Dates End	Inspection Type
	PSB-EP8 - SUPPLEMENTAL INSPECTION EP 95002		3			
2	IP 95002	Inspection For One Degraded Cornerstone Or Any Three White Inputs In A Strategic Performar		05/13/2002	05/17/2002	Supplemental Program
	RP-1 - ACRSA AND PIV		1			
2	IP 7112101	Access Control to Radiologically Significant Areas		06/24/2002	06/28/2002	Baseline Inspections
2	IP 71151	Performance Indicator Verification		06/24/2002	06/28/2002	Baseline Inspections
	EMB - BIENNIAL MODS		2			
2	IP 711117B	Permanent Plant Modifications		09/09/2002	09/13/2002	Baseline Inspections
	PSB-EP1 - EP EXERCISE BASELINE INSPECTION		3			
2	IP 7111401	Exercise Evaluation		09/16/2002	09/20/2002	Baseline Inspections
2	IP 7111404	Emergency Action Level and Emergency Plan Changes		09/16/2002	09/20/2002	Baseline Inspections
2	IP 71151	Performance Indicator Verification		09/16/2002	09/20/2002	Baseline Inspections
	OB-IN - INTIAL EXAM PREP WEEK		2			
2	X02226	COLUMBIA INITIAL EXAM (09/02)		09/23/2002	09/27/2002	Not Applicable
	OB-IN - INITIAL EXAMINATION		5			
2	X02226	COLUMBIA INITIAL EXAM (09/02)		10/07/2002	10/11/2002	Not Applicable
	RP-3 - ALARA		1			
2	IP 7112102	ALARA Planning and Controls		10/07/2002	10/11/2002	Baseline Inspections
	PSB-S1 - ACCESS AUTH/CONTROL, SEC PLAN, AND PIV		1			
2	IP 7113001	Access Authorization Program (Behavior Observation Only)		11/04/2002	11/08/2002	Baseline Inspections
2	IP 7113002	Access Control (Search of Personnel, Packages, and Vehicles: Identification and Authorizator		11/04/2002	11/08/2002	Baseline Inspections
2	IP 7113004	Security Plan Changes		11/04/2002	11/08/2002	Baseline Inspections
2	IP 71151	Performance Indicator Verification		11/04/2002	11/08/2002	Baseline Inspections
	PBE-PIR - PROBLEM ID INSP		3			
2	IP 71152	Identification and Resolution of Problems		11/25/2002	11/29/2002	Baseline Inspections
	OB-RQ - REQUAL INSPECTION		2			
2	IP 711111B	Licensed Operator Requalification		12/09/2002	12/13/2002	Baseline Inspections
	EMB - TRIENNIAL FP		5			
2	IP 7111105T	Fire Protection		03/03/2003	03/07/2003	Baseline Inspections
2	IP 7111105T	Fire Protection		03/17/2003	03/21/2003	Baseline Inspections

This report does not include INPO and OUTAGE activities.
This report shows only on-site and announced inspection procedures.