



CHAIRMAN

UNITED STATES  
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20555

January 12, 2000

*Per Evelyn Spellman Williams*

The Honorable Joseph I. Lieberman  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Lieberman:

I am responding to your letter dated November 29, 1999, in which you, Senator Dodd, and Congressman Gejdenson raised questions regarding corrective action program issues identified in two recent Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) inspection reports at Millstone Unit 2.

As you are aware, Millstone Unit 2 restarted earlier this year following an extended shutdown. During the shutdown, the licensee devoted a significant amount of effort to improving the corrective action program. The licensee instituted a program that established a low threshold for the identification and documentation of problems, in order to capture problems at an early stage and address them.

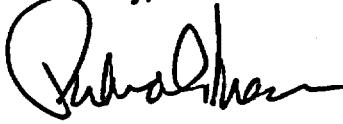
The NRC staff has continued to evaluate the implementation of the licensee's corrective action program and continues to view it as generally effective. Because of a low threshold for reporting and correcting plant conditions, several thousand condition reports were issued by Millstone by the end of 1999. Although the underlying issues involved in these instances are minor in nature, since these missed opportunities occurred within a short period of time and appeared to warrant increased licensee management attention, the concerns were highlighted in recent NRC inspection reports. Similar issues have been identified at other operating reactor facilities. These issues are dealt with as they are identified, in accordance with their safety and risk significance.

As part of our continuing enhanced oversight at Millstone, the NRC formed the Millstone Assessment Panel in July 1999 to provide heightened NRC oversight of performance monitoring, assessment and inspection of the Millstone facility. Members of this internal panel include management and staff representatives from our Headquarters Office in Rockville, Maryland, and the Region I Office in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania. At meetings on July 15 and November 8, 1999, the panel discussed the licensee's recent failures to initiate condition reports to ensure that effective follow on corrective actions would be taken. The specific issue you discussed in your letter, the failure to initiate a condition report when a procedure was not correctly followed during a Unit 2 startup, was discussed in detail. Although the panel agreed that this issue was not risk significant, failing to initiate condition reports was a concern because it was a repeat problem. As a result, the panel recommended that an NRC corrective action team inspection be conducted at Millstone. This team inspection has been scheduled for the first quarter of 2000. Additionally, following the panel meetings, the Region I Administrator, Mr. Hubert Miller, toured the Millstone station. During his visit, Mr. Miller discussed the staff's concern in this area with licensee senior management.

*DF02*

In closing, the NRC staff will continue to monitor the licensee's progress in addressing corrective action program issues. I trust this reply responds to your concern.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard A. Meserve". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "R" and a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Richard A. Meserve



CHAIRMAN

UNITED STATES  
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20555

January 12, 2000

The Honorable Christopher J. Dodd  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Dodd:

I am responding to your letter dated November 29, 1999, in which you, Senator Lieberman, and Congressman Gejdenson raised questions regarding corrective action program issues identified in two recent Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) inspection reports at Millstone Unit 2.

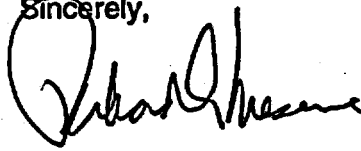
As you are aware, Millstone Unit 2 restarted earlier this year following an extended shutdown. During the shutdown, the licensee devoted a significant amount of effort to improving the corrective action program. The licensee instituted a program that established a low threshold for the identification and documentation of problems, in order to capture problems at an early stage and address them.

The NRC staff has continued to evaluate the implementation of the licensee's corrective action program and continues to view it as generally effective. Because of a low threshold for reporting and correcting plant conditions, several thousand condition reports were issued by Millstone by the end of 1999. Although the underlying issues involved in these instances are minor in nature, since these missed opportunities occurred within a short period of time and appeared to warrant increased licensee management attention, the concerns were highlighted in recent NRC inspection reports. Similar issues have been identified at other operating reactor facilities. These issues are dealt with as they are identified, in accordance with their safety and risk significance.

As part of our continuing enhanced oversight at Millstone, the NRC formed the Millstone Assessment Panel in July 1999 to provide heightened NRC oversight of performance monitoring, assessment and inspection of the Millstone facility. Members of this internal panel include management and staff representatives from our Headquarters Office in Rockville, Maryland, and the Region I Office in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania. At meetings on July 15 and November 8, 1999, the panel discussed the licensee's recent failures to initiate condition reports to ensure that effective follow on corrective actions would be taken. The specific issue you discussed in your letter, the failure to initiate a condition report when a procedure was not correctly followed during a Unit 2 startup, was discussed in detail. Although the panel agreed that this issue was not risk significant, failing to initiate condition reports was a concern because it was a repeat problem. As a result, the panel recommended that an NRC corrective action team inspection be conducted at Millstone. This team inspection has been scheduled for the first quarter of 2000. Additionally, following the panel meetings, the Region I Administrator, Mr. Hubert Miller, toured the Millstone station. During his visit, Mr. Miller discussed the staff's concern in this area with licensee senior management.

In closing, the NRC staff will continue to monitor the licensee's progress in addressing corrective action program issues. I trust this reply responds to your concern.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard A. Meserve". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "R" and "M".

Richard A. Meserve



CHAIRMAN

UNITED STATES  
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20555

January 12, 2000

The Honorable Sam Gejdenson  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Gejdenson:

I am responding to your letter dated November 29, 1999, in which you, Senator Lieberman, and Senator Dodd raised questions regarding corrective action program issues identified in two recent Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) inspection reports at Millstone Unit 2.

As you are aware, Millstone Unit 2 restarted earlier this year following an extended shutdown. During the shutdown, the licensee devoted a significant amount of effort to improving the corrective action program. The licensee instituted a program that established a low threshold for the identification and documentation of problems, in order to capture problems at an early stage and address them.

The NRC staff has continued to evaluate the implementation of the licensee's corrective action program and continues to view it as generally effective. Because of a low threshold for reporting and correcting plant conditions, several thousand condition reports were issued by Millstone by the end of 1999. Although the underlying issues involved in these instances are minor in nature, since these missed opportunities occurred within a short period of time and appeared to warrant increased licensee management attention, the concerns were highlighted in recent NRC inspection reports. Similar issues have been identified at other operating reactor facilities. These issues are dealt with as they are identified, in accordance with their safety and risk significance.

As part of our continuing enhanced oversight at Millstone, the NRC formed the Millstone Assessment Panel in July 1999 to provide heightened NRC oversight of performance monitoring, assessment and inspection of the Millstone facility. Members of this internal panel include management and staff representatives from our Headquarters Office in Rockville, Maryland, and the Region I Office in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania. At meetings on July 15 and November 8, 1999, the panel discussed the licensee's recent failures to initiate condition reports to ensure that effective follow on corrective actions would be taken. The specific issue you discussed in your letter, the failure to initiate a condition report when a procedure was not correctly followed during a Unit 2 startup, was discussed in detail. Although the panel agreed that this issue was not risk significant, failing to initiate condition reports was a concern because it was a repeat problem. As a result, the panel recommended that an NRC corrective action team inspection be conducted at Millstone. This team inspection has been scheduled for the first quarter of 2000. Additionally, following the panel meetings, the Region I Administrator, Mr. Hubert Miller, toured the Millstone station. During his visit, Mr. Miller discussed the staff's concern in this area with licensee senior management.

In closing, the NRC staff will continue to monitor the licensee's progress in addressing corrective action program issues. I trust this reply responds to your concern.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard A. Meserve". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "R".

Richard A. Meserve

**Similar letters to:**

**The Honorable Joseph I. Lieberman  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510**

**The Honorable Christopher J. Dodd  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510**

**The Honorable Sam Gejdenson  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515**