

February 17, 2000

Mr. W. R. McCollum, Jr.  
Vice President, Oconee Site  
Duke Energy Corporation  
7800 Rochester Highway  
Seneca, SC 29672

SUBJECT: OCONEE NUCLEAR STATION, UNITS 1, 2 AND 3 RE: SITE-SPECIFIC  
WORKSHEETS FOR USE IN THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION'S  
SIGNIFICANCE DETERMINATION PROCESS (TAC NO. MA6544 )

Dear Mr. McCollum:

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with one of the key implementation tools to be used by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) in the revised reactor oversight process that is currently expected to be implemented at Oconee Nuclear Station, Units 1, 2, and 3 in April 2000. Enclosed is a draft of the Risk-Informed Inspection Notebook that has been developed for the Oconee Nuclear Station, Units 1, 2, and 3, including the Significance Determination Process (SDP) worksheets, for your review. A final version will be used by inspectors to risk-characterize inspection findings. The SDP is discussed in more detail below.

On January 8, 1999, the NRC staff described to the Commission, plans and recommendations to improve the reactor oversight process in SECY-99-007, "Recommendations for Reactor Oversight Process Improvements." SECY-99-007 is available on the NRC's web site at [www.nrc.gov/NRC/COMMISSION/SECYS/index.html](http://www.nrc.gov/NRC/COMMISSION/SECYS/index.html). The new process, developed with stakeholder involvement, is designed around a risk-informed framework, which is intended to focus both the NRC's and licensee's attention and resources on those issues of more risk significance.

The performance assessment portion of the new process involves the use of both licensee-submitted performance indicator data and inspection findings that have been appropriately categorized based on their risk significance. In order to properly categorize an inspection finding, the NRC has developed the SDP. This process was described to the Commission in SECY-99-007A, "Recommendations for Reactor Oversight Process Improvements (Follow-up to SECY-99-007)," dated March 22, 1999, also available at the same NRC web site noted above.

The SDP for power operations involves evaluating an inspection finding's impact on the plant's capability: to limit the frequency of initiating events; to ensure the availability, reliability, and capability of mitigating systems; and to ensure the integrity of the fuel cladding, reactor coolant system, and containment barriers. As described in SECY-99-007A, the SDP involves the use of three tables. Table 1 is the estimated likelihood for initiating event occurrence during the degraded period. Table 2 describes how the significance is determined based on remaining mitigation system capabilities. Table 3 provides the bases for the failure probabilities associated with the remaining mitigation equipment and strategies.

As a result of the recently concluded pilot plant review effort, the NRC has determined that site-specific risk data is needed in order to provide a repeatable determination of the significance of an issue. Therefore, the NRC has contracted with Brookhaven National Laboratory (BNL) to develop the enclosed site-specific worksheets to be used in the SDP review. These worksheets were developed based on your Individual Plant Examination (IPE) submittals that were requested by Generic Letter 88-20. The NRC plans to use this site-specific information and the information you generated on risk significance determination worksheets for Oconee that was supplied in your letter dated November 30, 1999, to evaluate the significance of issues identified at your facility when the revised reactor oversight process is implemented industry-wide.

It is recognized that the IPE utilized during this effort may not contain current information. Therefore, the NRC or its contractor will conduct a site visit before April 2000 to discuss with your staff any notebook changes or corrections that may be appropriate. Specific dates for the site visit have not been determined, but will be communicated to you in the near future. The NRC is not requesting a written response or comments on the enclosed worksheets developed by BNL.

Sincerely,

*/RA/*

David E. LaBarge, Senior Project Manager, Section 1  
Project Directorate II  
Division of Licensing Project Management  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket Nos. 50-269, 50-270, and 50-287

Enclosure: Risk-Informed Inspection Notebook

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Oconee Nuclear Station

cc:

Ms. Lisa F. Vaughn  
Legal Department (PBO5E)  
Duke Energy Corporation  
422 South Church Street  
Charlotte, North Carolina 28201-1006

Anne W. Cottingham, Esquire  
Winston and Strawn  
1400 L Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20005

Mr. Rick N. Edwards  
Framatome Technologies  
Suite 525  
1700 Rockville Pike  
Rockville, Maryland 20852-1631

Manager, LIS  
NUS Corporation  
2650 McCormick Drive, 3rd Floor  
Clearwater, Florida 34619-1035

Senior Resident Inspector  
U. S. Nuclear Regulatory  
Commission  
7812B Rochester Highway  
Seneca, South Carolina 29672

Virgil R. Autry, Director  
Division of Radioactive Waste Management  
Bureau of Land and Waste Management  
Department of Health and Environmental  
Control  
2600 Bull Street  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201-1708

Mr. L. E. Nicholson  
Compliance Manager  
Duke Energy Corporation  
Oconee Nuclear Site  
7800 Rochester Highway  
Seneca, South Carolina 29672

Ms. Karen E. Long  
Assistant Attorney General  
North Carolina Department of  
Justice  
P. O. Box 629  
Raleigh, North Carolina 27602

L. A. Keller  
Manager - Nuclear Regulatory  
Licensing  
Duke Energy Corporation  
526 South Church Street  
Charlotte, North Carolina 28201-  
1006

Mr. Richard M. Fry, Director  
Division of Radiation Protection  
North Carolina Department of  
Environment, Health, and  
Natural Resources  
3825 Barrett Drive  
Raleigh, North Carolina 27609-7721

Mr. Steven P. Shaver  
Senior Sales Engineer  
Westinghouse Electric Company  
5929 Carnegie Blvd.  
Suite 500  
Charlotte, North Carolina 28209