

February 25, 2000

Mr. J. P. O'Hanlon
Senior Vice President - Nuclear
Virginia Electric and Power Company
5000 Dominion Blvd.
Glen Allen, Virginia 23060

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

Dear Mr. O'Hanlon:

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, which is currently expected to be implemented at Surry, Units 1 and 2, and North Anna, Units 1 and 2, in April 2000. Included in the enclosed Risk-Informed Inspection Notebooks are the Significance Determination Process (SDP) worksheets that inspectors will be using 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. 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 Lab (BNL) to develop site-specific worksheets to be used in the SDP review. These enclosed 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 in evaluating the significance of issues identified at your facilities 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 changes that may be appropriate. Specific dates for the site visit have not been determined, but will be communicated to you in the near future. In addition, the NRC is not requesting a written response or comments on the enclosed worksheets developed by BNL.

We will coordinate our efforts through your licensing or risk organizations as appropriate. If you have any questions, please contact me at 301-415-1448.

Sincerely,

/RA/

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

Docket Nos. 50-280, 50-281, 50-338,
and 50-339

Enclosures: As stated

cc: See next page

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Mr. J. P. O'Hanlon
Virginia Electric and Power Company

North Anna Power Station
Units 1 and 2

cc:

Mr. J. Jeffrey Lunsford
County Administrator
Louisa County
P.O. Box 160
Louisa, Virginia 23093

Mr. W. R. Matthews
Site Vice President
North Anna Power Station
P.O. Box 402
Mineral, Virginia 23117

Mr. Donald P. Irwin, Esquire
Hunton and Williams
Riverfront Plaza, East Tower
951 E. Byrd Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Mr. E. S. Grecheck
Site Vice President
Surry Power Station
Virginia Electric and Power Company
5570 Hog Island Road
Surry, Virginia 23883

Dr. W. T. Lough
Virginia State Corporation
Commission
Division of Energy Regulation
P.O. Box 1197
Richmond, Virginia 23209

Robert B. Strobe, M.D., M.P.H.
State Health Commissioner
Office of the Commissioner
Virginia Department of Health
P. O. Box 2448
Richmond, Virginia 23218

Old Dominion Electric Cooperative
4201 Dominion Blvd.
Glen Allen, Virginia 23060

Mr. J. H. McCarthy, Manager
Nuclear Licensing & Operations Support
Virginia Electric and Power Company
Innsbrook Technical Center
5000 Dominion Blvd.
Glen Allen, Virginia 23060

Office of the Attorney General
Commonwealth of Virginia
900 East Main Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Senior Resident Inspector
North Anna Power Station
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
1024 Haley Drive
Mineral, Virginia 23117

Virginia Electric and Power Company

Surry Power Station

cc:

Mr. Donald P. Irwin, Esq.
Hunton and Williams
Riverfront Plaza, East Tower
951 E. Byrd Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Mr. E. S. Grecheck
Site Vice President
Surry Power Station
Virginia Electric and Power Company
5570 Hog Island Road
Surry, Virginia 23883

Senior Resident Inspector
Surry Power Station
U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
5850 Hog Island Road
Surry, Virginia 23883

Chairman
Board of Supervisors of Surry County
Surry County Courthouse
Surry, Virginia 23683

Dr. W. T. Lough
Virginia State Corporation
Commission
Division of Energy Regulation
P. O. Box 1197
Richmond, Virginia 23209

Robert B. Strobe, M.D., M.P.H.
State Health Commissioner
Office of the Commissioner
Virginia Department of Health
P.O. Box 2448
Richmond, Virginia 23218

Office of the Attorney General
Commonwealth of Virginia
900 East Main Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Mr. J. H. McCarthy, Manager
Nuclear Licensing & Operations
Support
Innsbrook Technical Center
Virginia Electric and Power Company
5000 Dominion Blvd.
Glen Allen, Virginia 23060

Mr. J. P. O'Hanlon
Senior Vice President - Nuclear
Virginia Electric and Power Company
Innsbrook Technical Center
5000 Dominion Blvd.
Glen Allen, Virginia 23060

Mr. W. R. Matthews
Site Vice President
North Anna Power Station
Virginia Electric and Power Company
P. O. Box 402
Mineral, Virginia 23117