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March 30, 2000

U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
Document Control Desk  
Washington, DC 20555

Re: Reportable Occurrence: Violation of Tech Spec 6.1.3.a.1  
License No. R-2, Docket No. 50-005

Dear Sir or Madame:

This letter is to confirm, in accordance with Tech Spec 6.6.2, a verbal report of a reportable occurrence on March 30, 2000 at the Pennsylvania State University's Breazeale Nuclear Reactor. The verbal report was provided to Marvin Mendonca, NRC Headquarters and Tom Dragoun, NRC Region 1 at approximately 1515 hours on March 30, 2000.

A violation of Tech Spec 6.1.3.a.1 occurred when the control room was unoccupied by a licensed operator while the reactor was not secured. The Tech Spec states: "The minimum staffing when the reactor is not secured shall be: 1) A licensed operator present in the control room, in accordance with applicable regulations."

The duty SRO had completed the normal daily checkout, read over the procedure for an upcoming laboratory class, and left the control room without placing the reactor in a "secured" condition. The reactor was shutdown and all other conditions of having the reactor secured were met but the console key switch was not in the off position with the key removed as required by the definition of Reactor Secured, Tech Spec 1.1.29.b(2). The SRO responsible for the upcoming laboratory class entered the control room and noticed the key inserted in the console. The duty SRO was paged and returned to the control room. Based on a review of the log and the console printout as well as interviews of the individuals involved, the period of time during which the control room was not occupied by a licensed operator was less than four minutes.

The Director interviewed the duty SRO involved. The event was a result of momentary mental lapse on the part of the duty SRO. The individual has been counseled and will conduct a lessons learned training session at the next status meeting (scheduled for Monday, April 3, 2000). No changes to procedures have been identified; there is more than sufficient procedural guidance. A similar occurrence was reported in February 1998. This was a different individual.

A 14-day report will be submitted by April 13, 2000.

Sincerely,

C. Frederick Sears  
Director, Radiation Science  
and Engineering Center

pc: M. Mendonca (NRC Headquarters)  
T. Dragoun (NRC Region I)  
E. Pell  
L. Burton  
D. Sathianathan