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AUG 31 1989

Docket No. 50-414
License No. NPF-52
EA 89-138

Duke Power Company
ATTN: Mr. H. B. Tucker, Vice President
Nuclear Production Department
422 South Church Street
Charlotte, North Carolina 28242

Gentlemen:

SUBJECT: NOTICE OF VIOLATION
(NRC INSPECTION REPORT NO. 50-414/89-19)

This refers to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) inspection at the Catawba facility on June 16 - June 28, 1989. The inspection included a review of the circumstances surrounding an event where both channels of the Reactor Vessel Level Instrumentation System (RVLIS) on Unit 2 were discovered inoperable by your staff on June 16, 1989.

The report documenting this inspection was sent to you by letter dated July 14, 1989. As a result of this inspection, a significant failure to comply with NRC regulatory requirements was identified and, accordingly, NRC concerns relative to the inspection findings were discussed in Enforcement Conferences held on July 20, 1989 and August 15, 1989. The letter summarizing these Conferences was sent to you on August 29, 1989.

The violation described in the enclosed Notice of Violation (Notice) involved a failure to open the upper range pressure transmitter isolation valves on either channel of the Unit 2 RVLIS prior to entering Mode 3 on June 2, 1989. The violation resulted from poor judgement, inattention to detail and inadequate management controls for maintenance in several areas. A maintenance supervisor assigned two technicians, who were not qualified to perform unsupervised maintenance on RVLIS, to restore the system to operable status. This action was not in accordance with the Employee Training and Qualifications System (ETQS) program. The supervisor incorrectly presumed that the task was simple enough for the technicians to perform, failing to comprehend the basis for the qualification requirements. The technicians failed to properly restore the system to operable status due to their unfamiliarity with the system and the use of an inadequate procedure. The technicians used a system calibration procedure in which inapplicable steps had been marked "N/A" by a second maintenance supervisor. The marking had been performed without adequate attention to detail resulting in the appearance that key restoration steps were not applicable. Furthermore, the inadequate restoration was not identified by a third supervisor, who reviewed the completed work package.

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AUG 31 1989

You had the opportunity to prevent the inoperability of the RVLIS system during post-maintenance testing but failed to do so due to the inadequate scope of testing. Although your Maintenance Manual requires in Procedure 1.0 that a functional verification be performed on systems after maintenance to demonstrate that the component/system will operate as designed, and guidance is also provided stating that instruments should be verified for correct reading on local and remote gauges, your post-maintenance functional verification of the RVLIS system consisted of merely checking the reconnected instrument lines for leaks.

You also had the opportunity to discover the RVLIS inoperability earlier had you performed a more complete channel check of the RVLIS. It was determined that although RVLIS is comprised of two channels each with three ranges, (lower, dynamic and upper) you only perform a channel check on the dynamic range when the reactor coolant pumps are running. Vendor documents provided information as to the expected readings of the upper range of RVLIS with pumps running. Had that information been used as the basis for a channel check, your staff would have discovered the inoperable channels earlier.

In accordance with the "General Statement of Policy and Procedure for NRC Enforcement Actions," 10 CFR Part 2, Appendix C (1989), the violation described in the enclosed Notice has been categorized as a Severity Level III violation. We are aware that there are other indicators of reduced reactor vessel level in addition to the upper range RVLIS, but we consider the unavailability of any required ranges of RVLIS, especially under the circumstances of this case, to be a significant regulatory concern. Normally, a civil penalty is assessed for a Severity III violation. However, in recognition of Duke's initiative in identifying the violation through a monthly RVLIS system walkdown, promptly reporting the event to the NRC, and taking comprehensive corrective actions, after consultation with the Director, Office of Enforcement, and the Deputy Executive Director for Nuclear Material Safety, Safeguards, and Operations Support, I have decided that a civil penalty will not be proposed in accordance with Section V.G.3 of the Enforcement Policy.

You are required to respond to this letter and should follow the instructions specified in the enclosed Notice when preparing your response. In your response, you should document the specific actions taken and any additional actions you plan to prevent recurrence. After reviewing your response to this Notice, including your proposed corrective actions and results of future inspections the NRC will determine whether further NRC enforcement action is necessary to ensure compliance with NRC regulatory requirements.

In accordance with Section 2.790 of the NRC's "Rules of Practice," Part 2, Title 10, Code of Federal Regulations, a copy of this letter and its enclosure will be placed in the NRC Public Document Room.

The responses directed by this letter and the enclosed Notice are not subject to the clearance procedures of the Office of Management and Budget as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1980, Public Law No. 96-511.

AUG 31 1989

Duke Power Company

- 3 -

Should you have any questions concerning this letter, please contact us.

Sincerely,

151

Stewart D. Ebnetter
Regional Administrator

Enclosure:
Notice of Violation

cc w/encl:
T. B. Owen, Station Manager
Senior Resident Inspector - McGuire
State of South Carolina