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U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
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**SUSQUEHANNA STEAM ELECTRIC STATION
REPLY TO REQUEST FROM INITIAL EXAMINATION
REPORT NOS. 50-387/01-301 AND 50-388/01-301
PLA-5395**

**Docket Nos. 50-387
and 50-388**

Reference: Letter from Richard J. Conte (NRC Region 1) to R. G. Byram (PPL), "Susquehanna Steam Electric Station Units 1 & 2 Reactor Operator and Senior Reactor Operator Initial Examination Report Nos. 50-387-01-301, 50-388-01-301," dated October 10, 2001.

In an NRC letter dated October 10, 2001 [Reference], Mr. R. J. Conte identified a concern with the number of post-administration changes to the NRC written examination developed by PPL for Susquehanna Steam Electric Station. This letter provides PPL's response to Mr. Conte's request for our perspective on this problem.

The license examination is a culmination of a significant effort by the candidates, the instructional staff, and both line and training management. Station management expects the examination development to be conducted with diligence and attention to detail consistent with both its regulatory significance and its importance to our candidates. The number of post-administration written examination changes resulting from candidate and instructor review clearly did not meet our expectations. A station condition report was initiated in order to establish root cause and corrective actions.

Our evaluation of the problem identified a flawed methodology for instructional and technical review of the questions. Human performance shortcomings and failure to adequately schedule the resources for review and validation of the examination contributed to the problem.

PM 003

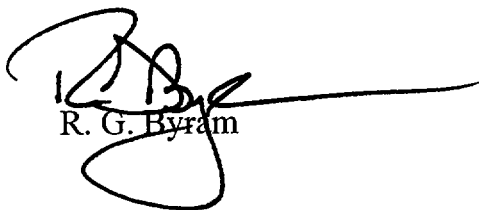
To improve our process and performance on development and review of examination material, the following corrective actions have been completed or are in progress:

- An additional instructor attended the NRC examination development workshop offered by Sonalysts in August of 2001.
- Benchmarking of other utility exam development processes for best practices was conducted.
- A test item development, review, and validation specialist was consulted to review and correct weaknesses in our current test item review process.
- A project schedule that identifies appropriate milestones and effectively allocates training and operations resources is being developed. This effort will be complete by February 2, 2002.
- The existing NRC examination development procedure will be revised to include the process and scheduling improvements. This effort will be complete by February 2, 2002.
- An effectiveness review of the process improvements will be performed in conjunction with the development of our internal candidate certification and the August 2002 NRC examinations to ensure PPL and NRC expectations are met. This review will be complete by August 1, 2002.

Additional information is available for NRC review at the station in our corrective action system records.

If there are any questions concerning the response, please contact Mr. J. L. Tripoli, Nuclear Regulatory Affairs at (570) 542-3021.

Sincerely,



R. G. Byram

copy: NRC Region I

Mr. S. L. Hansell, NRC Sr. Resident Inspector

Mr. D. S. Collins, NRC Project Manager

Mr. R. J. Conte, Chief Division of Reactor Safety