



UNITED STATES  
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

REGION II  
SAM NUNN ATLANTA FEDERAL CENTER  
61 FORSYTH STREET, SW, SUITE 23T85  
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30303-8931

March 15, 2006

Mr. M. Fecteau, Manager  
Columbia Plant  
Westinghouse Electric Company  
Commercial Nuclear Fuel Division  
Drawer R  
Columbia, SC 29250

SUBJECT: LICENSEE PERFORMANCE REVIEW (LPR) OF LICENSED ACTIVITIES  
FOR WESTINGHOUSE ELECTRIC COMPANY, DOCKET NUMBER 70-1151

Dear Mr. Fecteau:

Managers and staff in our Region II office in Atlanta, Georgia, and the Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards (NMSS) in Rockville, Maryland, completed a review of your performance in conducting NRC licensed activities at Westinghouse. The review evaluated your performance during the period beginning January 23, 2005, and ending February 17, 2006. Westinghouse's Columbia facility's performance was evaluated in four major areas: Safety Operations, Radiological Controls, Facility Support, and Special Topics. This letter and the enclosure provide to you the results of our review, and will be used as a basis for establishing the NRC oversight program for your conduct of licensed activities during the next 12 months.

Our review concluded that Westinghouse's Columbia facility continued to conduct its activities safely during the review period and is currently engaged in significant upgrades to the human performance and criticality safety programs.

The results of our review will be discussed with you during a meeting open to the public on April 12, 2006. Areas needing improvement are summarized in the enclosure to this letter. During the meeting, we expect you to discuss your view of your performance in the same major areas that the NRC evaluated. We are interested in hearing your perspectives on the corrective actions designed to improve the configuration management program, identification of nuclear criticality controls, compliance with procedures, and licensing submittals. The NRC recognizes that both corporate and facility management exerted significant effort to improve performance in the nuclear criticality safety program and management oversight of operations after the last performance review. The results of these efforts were evident in that the more significant performance issues addressed in the current performance review occurred early in the review period and in some cases were identified as a result of the "prevention of errors" activities you initiated to monitor procedure compliance.

Westinghouse's Columbia facility's performance still warrants the enhanced NRC oversight of operations beyond the core inspection program with additional inspection effort in the areas of safety operations and facility support. The additional NRC inspection effort will focus on nuclear criticality safety program improvements, safety bases revisions, identification of controls, and compliance with procedures. In addition, the NRC will conduct the next LPR in 12 months rather than the normal 24-month LPR frequency. Following that review, NRC will consider reinstating the 24-month LPR frequency if the current trend in improved performance continues.

In accordance with 10 CFR 2.390 of the NRC's "Rules of Practice," a copy of this letter and its enclosure will be available electronically for public inspection in the NRC Public Document Room or from the Publicly Available Records (PARS) component of NRC's document system (ADAMS). ADAMS is accessible from the NRC Web site at <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html> (the Public Electronic Reading Room).

Questions and comments about NRC's review of Westinghouse's Columbia facility's performance should be referred to Mr. Jay Henson, who can be reached by telephone at 404-562-4731.

Sincerely,

**/RA/**

William D. Travers  
Regional Administrator

Docket No. 70-1151  
License No. SNM-1107

Enclosure: Licensee Performance Review  
- Summary Outline

cc w/encl:  
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NAME	MCrespo	JLHenson	DMCollins	LRPlisco	RPierson	JStronsider
DATE	3/ /2006	3/ /2006	3/ /2006	3/ /2006	3/ /2006	3/ /2006
E-MAIL COPY?	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO

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**LICENSEE PERFORMANCE REVIEW FOR WESTINGHOUSE'S COLUMBIA FACILITY**

Enclosure

**(Part 1)****ASSESSMENT PERIOD: January 23, 2005 to February 17, 2006**

The following is a summary of the performance of Westinghouse's Columbia facility in the conduct of NRC licensed activities.

**PERFORMANCE AREA: SAFETY OPERATIONS**

This area is comprised of chemical safety, nuclear criticality safety (NCS), plant operations, and fire safety.

**Program Areas Needing Improvement**

- Identification of safety limits and controls in nuclear criticality safety analyses
  - The licensee failed to correctly determine calculational bias for use with explicit models which could result in a non-conservative bias, an inadequate NCS limit, and inadequate controls (Violation (VIO) 2005-201-03) .
  - The licensee failed to identify in NCS analysis that part of the integral fuel burnable absorber (IFBA) ventilation system was connected to a ventilation hood where uranium powder was present, and failed to identify adequate NCS limits and controls (VIO 2005-04-01) .
- Implementation of the configuration management program relative to nuclear criticality safety controls
  - The licensee failed to maintain double contingency for the sponge jet blaster due to inappropriate substitution of components (Inspection Report (IR) 2005-201).
  - An NCS valve interlock in the conversion area failed to close a vaporizer steam supply valve as designed due to an unauthorized handmade gasket in one of the flanges (Non-Cited Violation (NCV) 2006-002-01).

**PERFORMANCE AREA: RADIOLOGICAL CONTROLS**

This area is comprised of radiation protection, environmental protection, waste management, and transportation.

**Program Areas Needing Improvement**

- No specific areas needing improvement were identified for radiological controls.

**PERFORMANCE AREA: FACILITY SUPPORT**

This area is comprised of maintenance and surveillance, training, emergency preparedness, and management controls.

#### **Program Areas Needing Improvement**

- Management expectations for compliance with procedures
  - The licensee failed to ensure that the nuclear criticality safety procedure of sampling polypaks for moisture was adequately performed (IR 2005-02)
  - The licensee improperly stacked rod transfer caskets containing IFBA fuel rods (NCV 2005-202-01).
  - The licensee failed to limit fissile material to 1000 grams in the helium pressure chamber area (NCV 2006-201-02).
  - An operator failed to report and resolve an issue regarding the failure of a barcode reading as required by procedure (NCV 2005-203-02).

#### **PERFORMANCE AREA: SPECIAL TOPICS (LICENSING ACTIVITIES)**

This area is comprised of safety licensing.

#### **Program Areas Needing Improvement**

- Completeness and adequacy of licensing documents
  - Westinghouse withdrew its license renewal application based on feedback from the NRC staff during a public meeting held on September 12, 2005, and resubmitted it two months prior to the license expiration date.
  - The Environmental Report did not address the requirements of 10 CFR 51.45, hence a request for additional information had to be sent.
  - Westinghouse has not fully met the expectations for the demonstration of how the proposed margin of subcriticality is adequate to meet the performance requirements of 10 CFR 70.61(d). On June 6, 2005, NRC communicated those expectations to the licensee. Since then, there have been further communications between NRC and the licensee, including a site visit in September 2005.