

August 22, 2007

Mr. J. Barnie Beasley, Jr., P.E.,
Chairman, President, and Chief Executive Officer
Southern Nuclear Operating Company, Inc.
40 Inverness Center Parkway
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Dear Mr. Beasley:

On behalf of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), I am responding to your letter of June 25, 2007, in which you request that the NRC staff work with the Nuclear Energy Institute and other stakeholders to provide a reasonable basis upon which to determine the timeliness and accuracy of emergency classifications and ensure that the NRC's Significance Determination Process (SDP) and enforcement policies are in alignment with that basis.

The Commission supports the staff's decisions in both of the enforcement actions referenced in your June 25, 2007 letter. The Commission also agrees that it is important to have clear emergency preparedness guidance in place, which is why the staff continually works with stakeholders to ensure that the regulatory guidance is easily understood. Accordingly, the staff will review the basis for NRC's expectations for timely and accurate emergency plan classifications during an event, as part of the ongoing effort to improve the emergency preparedness regulatory guidance. Similar to the process used to develop the initial SDP, the staff will engage the public and industry stakeholders to ensure that the basis is well understood, and will further clarify the examples and explanations used in the SDP, as appropriate, to avoid uncertainty about the expectations for when, and at what level, an emergency should be declared at a nuclear power plant. As part of this effort, the staff will review the enforcement policy on emergency preparedness to ensure that the SDP and the enforcement policy are aligned.

Emergency exercises and exercise critiques are critical to maintaining and improving the skills of all involved emergency response stakeholders in preparation for the advent of an actual emergency situation. Emergency drills allow all involved stakeholders to practice those actions that will be required of them during a potential emergency. If an actual emergency situation occurs, and the stress levels of those involved may be heightened, those actions need to be well practiced. The post-exercise critiques afford licensees the opportunity to identify areas for improvement, implement lessons learned, and continually improve performance.

I appreciate your feedback on these issues and hope this addresses your concerns.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Dale E. Klein

cc: See next page

cc:

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