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 FACIL: 50-263 MONTICELLO NUCLEAR GENERATING PLANT, NORTHERN STATES
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SUBJECT: CONFIRMS 790502 TELCON RE POSSIBLE MEETING DURING WEEK OF
 790514 W/REPRESENTATIVES OF UTIL, NRC & MN POLLUTION CONTROL
 AGENCY AT AGENCY'S OFFICE TO DISCUSS SPENT FUEL STORAGE
 RACKS AT FACILITY.

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STATE OF MINNESOTA
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May 2, 1979

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Minneapolis, Minnesota 55401

Thomas A. Ippolito, Chief
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Division of Operating Reactors
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D.C. 20555

Gentlemen:

This will confirm our telephone conversations of this morning in which it was agreed that representatives of NSP and the NRC Staff will meet with representatives of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency at the offices of the MPCA, hopefully during the week of May 14, 1979, for the purpose of discussing the spent fuel storage racks at the Monticello nuclear generating facility. The MPCA deeply appreciates your willingness to participate in these discussions.

The final scheduling of the meeting is dependent on the NRC Staff's availability and will be arranged in the near future. If at all possible, we would prefer any day in the week of May 14 except May 17, because two key MPCA Staff members will be out of town on that day.

Unless you believe that the scope must be expanded, discussion will be strictly limited to the following six technical questions:

- (1) Given our knowledge of the rack design and fabrication methods, can it be concluded that open channels of communication presently exist along the entire 14-foot length of each and every corner?
- (2) Given our knowledge of the corrosion mechanisms and physical dimensions involved, is it possible that long-term corrosion may result in isolated blockage of corner channels so that localized swelling might reoccur during the thirty to forty-year projected life of the racks?

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Gary V. Welk, Manager
Thomas A. Ippolito, Chief
Page Two
May 2, 1979

- (3) If future isolated blockage of the corner vent channels is possible, are there technical or other reasons for failing to drill vent holes during fabrication at regular intervals along the entire 14-foot length of the channels?
- (4) Would an increase in the thickness of the inner stainless steel layer of the tubular wall make future swelling impossible, even if gas should become trapped in the future?
- (5) If an increase in the thickness of the inner stainless steel layer of the tubular wall would preclude all possibility of future swelling, regardless of the blockage of hydrogen gas in the future, are there technical or other reasons for failing to increase the thickness of that layer?
- (6) How could a jammed spent fuel assembly be safely removed in the event of renewed swelling, particularly if swelling is localized in the manner referred to in question (2), recognizing that the specific remedy employed at Haddam Neck was to drill vent holes which will already exist at Monticello?

The MPCA understands that there are specific answers to these technical questions which, for various reasons, were not fully explored in the Director's Decision dated April 24, 1979.

Because these discussions will be open to the public, it is important that members of the public fully understand the limited nature of the proposed meeting. As we have agreed, our discussions do not constitute a "hearing" in any sense of that term. No one will be testifying on behalf of any party and there will be no cross-examination. The meeting is not designed to be a search for fault but rather will provide a forum at which we all hope that the MPCA's narrow technical concerns about possible future rack swelling may be laid to rest.

I will be contacting you in the near future to request that you provide us with copies of a very limited number of the documents referred to in the Director's Decision or in our conver-

Gary V. Welk, Manager
Thomas A. Ippolito, Chief
Page Three
May 2, 1979

sations over the past few days. If you have any additional written materials on these six questions which could be provided at or before the meeting, that would be appreciated, but the MPCA is not asking you to prepare any further written materials for the meeting unless you believe that such materials might be helpful in addressing the questions.

As soon as the NRC Staff is able to suggest a meeting date, I will arrange a place at the MPCA. Thank you again for your cooperation in attempting to resolve the narrow technical concerns of my client.

Very truly yours,

John-Mark Stensvaag
John-Mark Stensvaag
Special Assistant
Attorney General

JMS:rmn

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