



Wisconsin Electric POWER COMPANY

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Cyp: Docket File (50-266)
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March 20, 1974

Mr. L. Manning Muntzing
Director of Regulation
U. S. Atomic Energy Commission
Washington, D. C. 20545

Dear Mr. Muntzing:

Thank you for your letter of March 12 concerning the issuance of public news releases as a means of achieving public acceptance of the nuclear industry, particularly in regard to the availability and reliability of nuclear power plants.

You may recall that this matter was brought to the attention of a number of utilities by Commissioner Doub during several appearances in the fall of 1973. We have since then had a number of discussions on this subject with representatives of the Directorate of Regulatory Operations, Region III. I enclose copy of our letter to this regional office dated February 25, 1974, in regard to a proposal concerning news releases each time one of our nuclear units is out of service.

While we agree with you that the industry has no reason not to be open and candid with the public concerning the operation of nuclear power plants, we believe the same openness and candidness should apply to nuclear facilities as apply to fossil generating units. The guidance provided to the Regional Directors in judging the need for announcements which you enclosed with your letter of March 12 is substantially different from that recommended to us in Commissioner Doub's remarks and also by the local Region III operations staff. We believe your guide is more realistic in discriminating between routine and significant items of interest.

We would agree that public announcements for all the types of events listed in your guide would probably prompt us to issue public announcements in advance of AEC releases except for the last three items tabulated. As we noted above, the non-scheduled shutdown of a nuclear plant expected to last for more than one week is, in our judgment,

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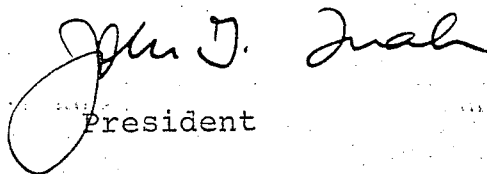
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no different from that of a coal plant. Normally, we would not make a public release of such an event unless the event would jeopardize our system reserve or might lead to an interruption of electrical service. We believe that shutdowns resulting from failure of or damage to safety related equipment should be defined in terms of their seriousness rather than in terms of the time effect unless, as in the case of non-scheduled shutdowns, there is some risk to system reserve or a potential for interruption of power supply.

We would be pleased to cooperate with you and with the Directorate of Regulatory Operations in our region in effecting this program. We are pleased to note that since Point Beach Nuclear Plant received its first operating license in October of 1970, we have experienced possibly two events of the type tabulated in your guide that we would have interpreted as suggesting a public news release.

Very truly yours,



John G. Quale

President

Enclosure

cc: Mr. James G. Keppler, Regional Director
Directorate of Regulatory Operations, Region III