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SUBJECT: Special Rept 3-SR-89-003: on 890215, radioactive effluent
 monitor inoperable for greater than 72 h.

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192-00457-JGH/TDS/DAJ

March 15, 1989

U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
NRC Document Control Desk
Washington, D.C. 20555

Dear Sirs:

Subject: Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station (PVNGS)
Unit 3
Docket No. STN 50-530 (License No. NPF-74)
Special Report 3-SR-89-003
File: 89-020-404

Attached please find Special Report 3-SR-89-003 prepared and submitted pursuant to Technical Specifications 3.3.3.8 ACTION 42(b) and 6.9.2. This report discusses the inoperability of a radioactive effluent monitor.

If you have any questions, please contact T. D. Shriver, Compliance Manager, at (602) 393-2521.

Very truly yours,

J. G. Haynes
Vice President
Nuclear Production

JGH/TDS/DAJ/kj

Attachment

cc: D. B. Karner (all w/attachments)
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PALO VERDE NUCLEAR GENERATING STATION

Radiation Monitoring Unit Inoperable for Greater Than 72 Hours

License No. NPF-74

Docket No. STN 50-530

Special Report No. 3-SR-89-003

This Special Report is submitted in accordance with Technical Specification 3.3.3.8 ACTION 42(b) and 6.9.2 for an event in which the Unit 3 Condenser Evacuation System high range effluent monitor (RU-142) was inoperable for greater than 72 hours. The 72 hour limit for inoperability was exceeded at approximately 1710 MST on February 15, 1989. Pursuant to Technical Specification 3.3.3.8 ACTIONS 37 and 40, the Preplanned Alternate Sampling Program (PASP) was initiated at approximately 0300 MST on February 15, 1989.

At approximately 1710 MST on February 12, 1989 RU-142 was declared inoperable as a result of the Condenser Evacuation System low range effluent monitor (RU-141) being declared inoperable due to grab sample results inconsistent with monitor indication. Radioactive effluent monitor RU-141 continuously monitors the condenser vacuum pump/gland seal exhaust for gaseous activity resulting from primary to secondary leakage. Monitors RU-141 and RU-142 work as a pair with RU-141 as the low range monitor and RU-142 as the high range monitor. Normal configuration consists of RU-141 operating with RU-142 in standby. Low range monitor RU-141 automatically starts RU-142 and initiates filtration of the condenser vacuum pump/gland seal exhaust whenever the monitor registers a HIGH-HIGH alarm condition. RU-142 is provided for tracking radioactive effluents during postulated accident scenarios. RU-142 must be declared inoperable when RU-141 is inoperable.

An approved work document was initiated to troubleshoot the cause of the inconsistent RU-141 indication. During troubleshooting, it was identified that the inconsistent indication was caused by damage to the detector. Water vapor entrained in the sample stream condensed in the detector chamber (coldest point in the system) and caused damage to the detector.

RU-141 and RU-142 are not being returned to service until long-term corrective action can be taken. PVNGS has experienced several instances wherein moisture buildup has resulted in Condenser Evacuation System radioactive effluent monitor improper operation. In order to correct this problem, PVNGS engineering personnel, with the assistance of an independent consulting firm, are reviewing the design of the monitor. Based upon the engineering evaluation, appropriate design modifications will be prepared and implemented. The long-term corrective actions will be described in a supplement to Unit 3 LER 530/88-08. Following the implementation of the long-term design modifications, RU-141 and RU-142 will be returned to service. It is anticipated that the monitors will be returned to service during Unit 3's first refueling outage.

