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192-00472-JGH/TDS/DAJ
April 25, 1989

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

Dear Sirs:

Subject: Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station (PVNGS)
Unit 1
Docket No. STN 50-528 (License No. NPF-41)
Special Report 1-SR-89-003
File: 89-020-404

Attached please find Special Report 1-SR-89-003 prepared and submitted pursuant to Technical Specifications 3.3.3.8 ACTION 42(b) and 6.9.2. This report discusses an inoperable radiation 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 UNIT 1

Radiation Monitoring Unit Inoperable for Greater Than 72 Hours

License No. NPF-41

Docket No. 50-528

Special Report No. 1-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 1 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 1135 MST on April 2, 1989. Pursuant to Technical Specification 3.3.3.8 ACTIONS 37 and 40, the Preplanned Alternate Sampling Program (PASP) was initiated at approximately 1135 MST on March 30, 1989.

At approximately 1135 MST on March 30, 1989, RU-142 was declared inoperable as a result of the Condenser Evacuation System low range effluent monitor (RU-141) being declared inoperable. RU-141 was declared inoperable due to engineering concerns regarding the effects of moisture in the gas channel. 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. Based upon gas channel readings, low range monitor RU-141 automatically starts RU-142 and initiates filtration of the condenser vacuum pump/gland seal exhaust whenever a HIGH-HIGH alarm condition is registered. RU-142 is provided for tracking radioactive effluents during postulated accident scenarios. RU-142 must be declared inoperable when RU-141 is inoperable.

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. During this review, information was obtained from the independent consulting firm on March 27, 1989, which brought into question the sensitivity, and thus the accuracy, of the gas chamber. This information was reviewed by PVNGS engineering and management personnel. As a prudent measure, RU-141 was declared inoperable until engineering resolution of the moisture problem could be effected.

As an interim measure to expedite returning the monitors to service, an engineering evaluation is in progress to determine if additional heat tracing would be effective. This engineering evaluation is expected to be completed by May 15, 1989. If additional heat tracing is determined to be effective, the heat tracing will be installed on RU-141 and -142 and returned to service during the current Unit 1 refueling outage.

Based upon the results of the evaluation provided by the independent consultant firm, long term design modifications will be implemented to permanently resolve the moisture problem. The parts required to implement the design modification are expected to be available by August 1, 1989. Based upon parts availability, the design modification is expected to be implemented by August 15, 1989.