

DANTE B. FASCELL
19TH DISTRICT, FLORIDA

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Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

July 6, 1989

Mr. Jerome Kennedy
Director, Congressional Affairs
Nuclear Regulatory Commission
1717 "H" Street, N.W., Room 9204
Washington, D. C. 20555


Dear Mr. Kennedy:

Enclosed is a copy of correspondence from one of my constituents.

It would be greatly appreciated if you would accord the comments in the letter every consideration and provide me with a report on the matter.

Many thanks for your assistance.

Sincerely,



DANTE B. FASCELL
Member of Congress

DBF/BT

Enclosure

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MS. EVA SIEGEL
9305 SW 72TH AVE #436
MIAMI, FL 33156

The Hon. Dante Fascella- 6/27/11

Some time ago I wrote to
you re the enclosed.

When are the people in the
vicinity of Turkey Point
Plant going to feel secure?

For years the NRC has
given them time and more
time and more time with
no improvement in the situation.
Eva Siegel

Local News

Tuesday, October 6, 1987

The Miami Herald

Section B

Inspectors to monitor FPL plant

NRC could order Turkey Point closed

By STEPHEN K. DOIG
Herald Staff Writer

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission, provoked by another incident at Florida Power & Light's trouble-plagued Turkey Point power plant, has sent in a team of inspectors to monitor the plant's control room operators around the clock.

The plant's two reactors could be ordered shut down temporarily if the inspectors aren't satisfied that the operators can run Turkey Point properly, according to David Verrelli, the NRC's overseer of FPL.

"That's always an option," Verrelli said Monday afternoon. "If they were to have another incident... Well, I think we're that close."

Verrelli said he expected the NRC to announce a long-term program of increased regulatory surveillance at Turkey Point before the end of this week. Outside experts would probably be brought in to analyze plant management.

"We want them to develop a plan to do an independent assessment of their whole management structure at Turkey Point," Verrelli said.

The special NRC inspection team arrived Sept. 26. Verrelli said that such detailed scrutiny of control room operations is rare.

FPL spokeswoman Stacey Shaw, although acknowledging the seriousness of the NRC's scrutiny, said Monday that a shutdown of Turkey Point hadn't been threatened by the NRC.

"I don't think that was a viable part of the

Please turn to NRC/2B



NRC inspectors will monitor Turkey Point

NRC/from 1B

discussion," Shaw said. "Of course, if anything else significant happens at Turkey Point, we certainly are aware that the NRC is looking very closely. We don't intend to let anything happen."

Such action isn't unprecedented. In March, for instance, the NRC summarily shut down the Peach Bottom nuclear plant in Pennsylvania after an inspector found the plant operators sleeping on duty.

The latest management lapse at Turkey Point occurred Sept. 13, when a licensed control room operator allowed a supervised but unlicensed shift technician to operate one of the control buttons, according to Verrelli and Shaw.

FPL supervisors learned of the violation, suspended the operator and promptly notified the NRC. The correct button was touched, Verrelli said, but the incident was a violation of NRC regulations.

It was also another straw on the proverbial camel's back.

In 1986, FPL was fined a total of \$475,000 for a variety of problems.

Then, early this year, Turkey Point's Unit 4 reactor had to be shut down for five months to clean up corrosion caused by a leak of cooling water saturated with boric acid. FPL was fined \$100,000 for failing to detect the corrosion, followed by a \$75,000 fine for several security lapses that occurred over the past two years.

Next, in July, a Turkey Point technician unwittingly disabled a valve necessary to activate the plant's emergency back-up cooling water system. The error, which wasn't caught for 20 hours, might result in another fine.

Then came the control room incident.

By contrast, FPL's St. Lucie twin-reactor power plant is considered a model facility with one of the best records among the more than 100 nuclear reactors operating around the country.

Shaw noted that Turkey Point management has been concentrating for the past several years on major hardware upgrades at the plant. She conceded that training and supervision seem to have slipped.

"We probably haven't devoted enough attention to people performance," Shaw said. "We recognize that we have to devote greater attention to the human performance factor and not just the equipment."

In August, FPL made veteran nuclear engineer John Odum vice-president in charge of nuclear operations at Turkey Point. Odum, a 44-year-old graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, Harvard

FINES PAID OR PENDING

In the past five years, Florida Power & Light has paid \$965,000 in fines for a variety of violations.

1987

FINE PROBABLE for Sept. 13 incident in which control room operator allowed an unlicensed technician to push a control button.

FINE PROBABLE for failing to discover immediately that an operator mistakenly disabled a backup cooling water valve.

\$75,000 for inadequate security during refueling. FPL is contesting the amount.

\$100,000 for failing to detect boric acid corrosion.

\$75,000 for security guards caught sleeping and failure to properly escort visitors.

1986

\$25,000 for allowing a worker to enter a high radiation area.

\$50,000 for improper installation of monitoring instruments.

\$300,000 for failure to properly maintain several elements of the emergency cooling water system.

\$100,000 for improperly figuring safety margins when redesigning the spent fuel pools.

1985

\$25,000 for improper maintenance of the cooling water intake system.

1984

\$150,000 for allowing failure of the backup cooling water pumps and violations of rules on electrical design changes.

1983

\$100,000 for failure to properly maintain the backup water pumps.

\$40,000 for failure to properly monitor radiation doses for workers.

Business School and the Navy's nuclear submarine program, has been with FPL since 1974.

Shaw said Odum has begun to institute new training and supervision procedures.

"We have made great strides, but not fast enough," Shaw said. "I think our entire management now has sort of totally focused their attention on meeting the performance goals we have outlined."

They had better, Verrelli suggested strongly.

"In Turkey Point's case," he said, "the question is whether they can get out of the hole."

an extended maintenance and refueling outage that lasted through most of the first half of this year.

In fact, Turkey Point had a good operating record in 1988, showing significant progress in the key performance indicators used by the NRC to spot problem plants.

It seemed that FPL finally had overcome the series of equipment, training and security problems that had cost the plant more than \$1 million in NRC fines since 1983.

But then, this spring, Turkey Point was hit with a double whammy.

First, in March, a dozen of Turkey Point's reactor operators failed an annual license requalification exam.

Operators take the exam, part of which is performed in the plant's control room simulator, in four-member teams. If one member of a team does something wrong, all team members fail.

Unfortunately for FPL, the company allowed several Turkey Point managers — who had licenses but no longer worked regular shifts in the control room — to take the March exam without extensive refresher training. Rusty from lack of recent experience, the managers made errors that caused their teams to fail.

"We should have known better," Hudiburg admits. "That was a real setback."

Since then, the regular shift operators have requalified. But the damage in the eyes of the NRC was done.

"Even if they don't regularly work control room shifts, those people were licensed to operate the reactor," says Ernst, of the NRC. "Just because they are management doesn't mean they should hold licenses if they can't requalify."

In April came the second blow.

John Conway, a highly regarded nuclear plant expert that FPL had brought in last year to lead Turkey Point's hoped-for renaissance, was hired away by another utility. Along



Threat of NRC shutdown hangs over Turkey Point

FPL, FROM 1B

fuel surcharges for each residential customer.

A long-term Turkey Point shutdown would leave FPL with little margin to spare in generating enough power to meet Florida's growing demand for electricity.

With the generating capacity of its 13 plants and its contracts to purchase outside power, FPL can supply a maximum of 16,070 megawatts of power to its customers across Florida.

That total capacity leaves a fairly comfortable 19.9 percent margin above the record peak system load of 12,876 megawatts.

But without the 1,292 megawatts supplied by the Turkey Point reactors, that margin drops to 12.9 percent.

And if any other plants have an equipment problem, or if growth and hot weather push electricity demand to new highs, FPL would be strained to the limit.

"The stakes are high, no question about it," says C.O. Woody, FPL's executive vice president.

Despite the corporate and customer disruption an indefinite shutdown would cause, FPL's top executives aren't fooling themselves that the NRC will go easy on Turkey Point. They acknowledge the depth of the NRC's exasperation.

"We are a troubled plant," says Ken Harris, the new vice president in charge of Turkey Point. "The NRC knows we've done good things at times, but we haven't been able to sustain a good solid operation."

Hudiburg agrees.

"They are tired of erratic behavior," Hudiburg says of the NRC. "They want to see consistency. They don't want to see new programs — they want performance."

Despite Turkey Point's reputation, Hudiburg insists that during the next six months FPL can satisfy the NRC that three years of improvements in equipment and management really are beginning to pay off.

"Nothing demonstrates performance better than a smooth-running plant," Hudiburg says. "I think both units [at Turkey Point] will operate well this year."



'This is the most serious problem this company has. We are disappointed we haven't done a better job.'

John Hudiburg,
FPL's chief executive officer

with the exam failures, the NRC staff cited Conway's departure as a troubling management instability in deciding to keep FPL on the NRC's watch list for another six months.

Losing Conway could help FPL in the longer run.

Forced to find strong management for Turkey Point in a hurry, Hudiburg looked to St. Lucie, FPL's other nuclear plant.

In contrast to Turkey Point,

which was built in the early 1970s, the newer St. Lucie plant is widely acknowledged to be one of the best in the nuclear industry. Its Unit 2 reactor, for instance, operated day and night without a hitch for a record 14 months before finally being shut down for refueling in January.

"We learned a lot of lessons from Turkey Point that we applied to St. Lucie," Woody says in explanation of the dramatic differences between the records of the two plants.

Hudiburg tapped Harris, St. Lucie's chief, to go run Turkey Point. Harris, a veteran FPL nuclear executive with extensive previous experience at Turkey Point, brought with him several key St. Lucie managers.

"The site management is significantly stronger than ever," Stuart Ebnetter, the NRC's regional administrator, said at the June 1 NRC meeting. "The departure of [Conway] may be really a blessing in disguise."

Harris says he understands the major problems remaining at Turkey Point:

- An outdated security system that relies too heavily on guards — who occasionally have been caught sleeping — rather than on electronic sensors. A new multimillion-dollar security system will be installed within two years.

- A maintenance backlog that, although shrinking, remains uncomfortably large. Harris says, however, that the emphasis finally is shifting to preventive maintenance, rather than the past practice of deferring maintenance until an outright repair was needed.

- A lack of experience among the instrument and control technicians who maintain the plant's equipment. Harris said he is actively recruiting experienced technicians.

These problems can be solved, Harris is certain.

But the fixes will take time — and the time for fixes is running out for Turkey Point.



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