

NSP

NORTHERN STATES POWER COMPANY

MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA 55401

October 14, 1975

Mr. D. L. Ziemann, Chief
Operating Reactors Branch #2
Division of Reactor Licensing
U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, DC 20555



Dear Mr. Ziemann:

MONTICELLO NUCLEAR GENERATING PLANT
Docket No. 50-263 License No. DPR-22
Response to September 24, 1975
Letter on CRD Collet Housing Cracking

Regulatory

File Cy.

This letter is written in response to your September 24, 1975 letter and proposed technical specification changes concerning cracks observed in control rod drive collet housings at plants similar in design to Monticello. We have reviewed the proposed changes and the safety evaluation to determine the effect the changes will have on plant safety and operation. While we do not object to issuance of the interim technical specification based upon the cracked collet housing experience, we ask for consideration of the following comments prior to its issuance.

The current technical specifications allow operation to continue with up to six inoperable control rods if the shutdown margin can be maintained. The limit of six was established on the basis of it being indicative of some unidentified generic problem. While collet housing cracking has not caused an inoperable control rod to date, it falls in the category of a potentially generic cause of inoperability. The NRC safety evaluation does not identify a specific basis for the requirement to shut down on seeing the symptoms of one cracked collet housing, nor does it specifically identify differences in this potentially generic problem in support of the reduction in number of inoperable rods.

The proposed changes will increase the likelihood of plant unavailability through forced shutdowns. Such shutdowns may be the result of collet housing cracking or some unrelated problem that cannot be distinguished from housing cracking and for which shutdown is unwarranted. We believe that the potential loss of availability can be minimized greatly without compromising safety by allowing operation to continue until multiple control rod drives show the symptoms of complete circumferential cracking of the collet housing.

We would also like to suggest two clarifying changes to the proposed technical specifications. The second sentence of proposed specification 4.3.A.2 (page 76) refers to "control rod drive mechanism damage." This phrase should be restricted in scope

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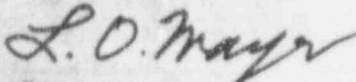
Mr. D. L. Ziemann

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by the words "a failed collet housing." The last sentence of the proposed bases for 3.3A and 4.3.A (page 83) refers to a "severed rod." This term should be changed to read "severed collet housing."

Yours very truly,



L. O. Mayer, PE
Manager, Nuclear Support Services

LOM/MHV/deb

cc: J. G. Keppler
G. Charnoff
MPCA
Attn: J. W. Ferman

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|---|---|
| DESCRIPTION: Letter Re. our letter on 9-24-75 | ENCLOSURES: Letter and proposed Tech. Spec Change concern ing CRD Collect Housing Cracking, and correct ion to page 83 to read..... (40 Copies Enclosure Received) |
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PLANT NAME: Monticello

FOR ACTION/INFORMATION

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[Handwritten signatures and initials]