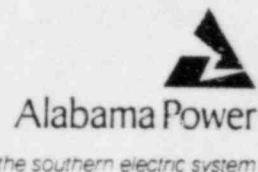


Alabama Power Company  
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Post Office Box 2641  
Birmingham, Alabama 35291  
Telephone 205 323-5341

F. L. CLAYTON, JR.  
Senior Vice President



January 9, 1979

Docket No. 50-348

Director of Nuclear Reactor Regulation  
U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
Washington, D.C. 20555

Attn: Mr. Albert Schwencer

Gentlemen:

J. M. FARLEY NUCLEAR PLANT-UNIT 1  
CONTAINMENT PURGING DURING NORMAL PLANT OPERATION

This letter is in response to Mr. A. Schwencer's letter to Alabama Power Company dated November 28, 1978 concerning containment purging during normal plant operation for the Farley Nuclear Plant Unit 1.

The containment purge system for the Farley Nuclear Plant has the capability to purge the containment through 48 inch valves or 18 inch valves.

The 48 inch purge valves are used for limited purging and the 18 inch mini-purge valves are used to continuously purge the containment during plant operation. These mini-purge valves are designed to close against a pressure of 53.5 psig, but have been tested to close against a pressure of 65 psig. A diagram illustrating this system is enclosed.

Alabama Power Company is conducting an evaluation which will justify unlimited purging using the mini-purge system during power operation. Justification will be provided in response to NRC Branch Technical Position CSB 6-4 by February 2, 1979.

Alabama Power Company plans to conduct an evaluation to justify limited purge with 48 inch purge valves at a later date. A schedule for completion of this evaluation will be forwarded when finalized.

In addition, Alabama Power Company has reviewed the Millstone incidents described in the above letter in light of the Farley Nuclear Plant design. It was identified that the Millstone control board is designed with some switches which are spring loaded to a center position (auto position). If one wished to maintain contact, the switch control handle could be pulled out and turned to the "on" position, and the switch would lock out all automatic signals and maintain contact. However, the Farley Nuclear Plant does

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Mr. Albert Schwencer  
Page Two  
January 9, 1979

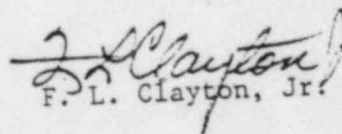
not have this type of switch on its control board. If an operator needs to override automatic signals, he has to hold the control switch all the time, but the moment he releases the switch it returns to "auto" position. Thus, the control circuitry design of the Farley Nuclear Plant is different from that of the Millstone Plant.

We have performed a review of the design of the safety actuation signal circuits for the Containment Purge System (including mini-purge). It was determined that overriding the safety actuation signal for those particular valves is not possible. Our evaluation of the other safety actuation signal circuits which incorporate a manual override feature will be completed by February 2, 1979.

APCo plans to continue purging with the mini-purge system during operation as discussed with the NRC Staff on January 5, 1979. The 48 inch purge valves will be restricted to an absolute minimum while operating in hot shutdown, hot standby, startup and power operation, not to exceed 90 hours per year pending completion of NRC review.

Should you have any question concerning the above, please advise.

Yours truly,

  
F. L. Clayton, Jr.

FLCJr/TNE:bhj

cc: Mr. R. A. Thomas  
Mr. G. F. Trowbridge