

Wall Street Journal

NEW YORK, N. Y.

MAY 6 1983

Seabrook Inspector Fakes Data, Says PS Of New Hampshire

By a WALL STREET JOURNAL Staff Reporter

SEABROOK, N.H. — Public Service Co. of New Hampshire said a weld inspector checking construction of the Seabrook nuclear power plant had falsified inspection records.

Public Service said the inspector, who worked for the welding subcontractor on the project, had been responsible for inspecting 2,400 welds over two years. Public Service said the inspector had been fired, following investigations of suspicions that he hadn't examined some piping and structural steel welds required.

PS of New Hampshire said the welds will be checked over the next few weeks. It said it doesn't expect the inspections, or repairs if necessary, to affect the safety, cost or timing of completing the Seabrook nuclear plants. It said it reported the problem to the federal Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Public Service estimates the two-unit Seabrook plant will cost \$5.2 billion, with the first unit completed in 1984 and the second in 1987. Outside estimates are higher, and last week the state Public Utilities Commission said the plant could cost \$9 billion, with the units completed in 1986 and 1990.

Public Service said the welding inspector worked for Pullman-Higgins, a joint venture between J.C. Higgins Co., a closely held company based in Stoughton, Mass., and Pullman Power Products Co., a Williamsport, Pa., unit of Wheelabrator-Frye Inc., which is in turn owned by Signal Cos. An official of Pullman-Higgins couldn't be reached for comment. Public Service declined to name the weld inspector.

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News Contact

Date: 215 / 337 - 5332

Name: Monica McGinnis

Org: NRC / Karl Abraham's Office

Reason for Call

THE BOSTON GLOBE FRIDAY, MAY 8, 1982

N.H. utility says welding records falsified at Seabrook atomic plant

By Jerry Adamson

An investigation at the Seabrook, N.H., nuclear power plant has found falsification of inspection records for welded joints in piping, pipe braces and structural steel, the Public Service Co. of New Hampshire disclosed yesterday.

The utility said the number of records that were falsified was not known, but as many as 2400 welds may have to be re-inspected in Unit 1 of the two-reactor plant.

Public Service said it has yet to determine if any re-welding will be needed, but it defects in critical cooling system heat transfer piping were to go unrecovered, they could lead to a severe accident once the plant is operational.

The company said that it foresees no effect on the plant's safety, cost or completion date.

Public Service spokesman John Cavanaugh said the falsification was discovered by a subcontractor during an internal audit of quality assurance practices on the job.

"They originally suspected something when the inspector signed off on some work that would actually require more work than one person to carry out and the contractor realized that no one else had been involved," he said.

Cavanaugh said the inspector, who had been on the job in Seabrook since February 1982, was fired. He declined to identify the employee and said no

other action against him was contemplated.

Karl Abraham, a spokesman for the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, which was told of the finding by Public Service yesterday, said that agency had not decided whether it will take any action.

"We have been informed and we are going to look into it," NRC spokesman Abraham said. "There is a formal procedure that we follow in such cases, but we have not determined whether it will be used."

Cavanaugh said the subcontractor, Pullman-Idipine Co., a unit of Pullman Power Products Inc., of Williamsport, Pa., will need two weeks to determine how many welds must be inspected using radiography and other techniques.

Officials of Pullman Power Products could not be reached for comment last night.

Cavanaugh said it also is uncertain how many inspection reports the inspector falsified. He said the estimate of 2400 welds that might have to be checked represents the number of inspections for which the inspector filed reports during the past 15 months.

"All we know at this point is that in some cases... the actual field work did not take place," Cavanaugh said.

Falsification of quality assurance records at nuclear power plants has been

a perennial problem for the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Last November, in the largest case of its kind, the agency ordered construction stopped at the nearly complete William M. Zimmer plant in southeastern Ohio after a lengthy investigation that found safety documents had been falsified and inspectors had been harassed.

Observers say Public Service also has afforded any long delays in construction of the Seabrook plant. The company estimates that each month that work is delayed adds \$30 million to \$40 million to the plant's total cost.

Even now, estimates of Seabrook's ultimate cost and production about of its completion vary.

Public Service says the total cost for both units will be \$5.3 billion and that Unit 1 will be completed in December 1984.

The New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission predicted last week, however, that the plant's total cost will be \$9 billion and Unit 1 won't be finished until March 1986.

Because of delays to date, three minority owners of the Seabrook plant - the New England Power Co., Central Vermont Public Service Co. and the Massachusetts Municipal Wholesale Electric Co. - have pushed during the last month for postponement of Unit 2 at the plant. Public Service, the plant's majority owner, has resisted the move.

WASHINGTON--The Nuclear Regulatory Commission, in a 5-0 vote, said it will issue an order by June 9 suspending operation of the Indian Point nuclear power reactors unless significant deficiencies cited by the Federal Emergency Management Agency in emergency plans are eliminated. The Commission said it will change its mind if deficiencies in emergency planning no longer exist by that time; or adequate interim actions have been or will be taken; that the deficiencies are shown to be not significant; or that "other compelling reasons exist to permit operation of the facility, or there are other factors justifying continued operation." The Commission set oral presentations by the plant operators and other interested governmental agencies for May 26. New York Times, Washington Post, Wall Street Journal, 5/6.

The New York Times carried a number of articles related to the NRC ruling on Indian Point. They include excerpts from statements on the NRC decision--NRC Chairman Nunzio J. Palladino: "I believe a workable solution is possible to the emergency planning deficiencies. . .I would urge that all interested groups. . .work together to reach a solution." Commissioner John Ahearne: "If emergency planning is to have any meaning, we must be prepared to do what we said we would." In addition to the excerpts, the Times carried biographical sketches of the five NRC Commissioners; a 30-year history of the problems at Indian Point; an analysis of what lead to the ruling on Indian Point; and a series of questions and answers on the cost of shutting down Indian Point. 5/6.

SEABROOK, NH--Public Service Co. of New Hampshire said it has reported to the NRC that a subcontractor weld inspector checking construction of the Seabrook nuclear power plant had falsified inspection records. The utility said piping and structural steel welds will be checked over the next few weeks. Wall Street Journal, 5/6.

TOLEDO, OH--Toledo Edison said it expects to reduce electricity rates by as much as 14% because of efficiencies generated by the Davis-Besse nuclear station. Wall Street Journal, 5/6.

The Baltimore Evening Sun carried a short article on General Public Utilities Chairman William Kuhns telling shareholders that the company is looking at a restart of Three Mile Island 1 in July. 5/5.

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1-Page

Press Intelligence, Inc.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005

Front Page	Edit Page	Other Page

DOVER, N.H.
FOSTER'S DEMOCRAT
JUN 8 1983
EVENING - 19:053

Report: Falsified Seabrook records limited to one worker

By PEYTON FLEMING
Democrat Staff Writer

SEABROOK — Some 1,996 welds are being re-evaluated at the Seabrook nuclear plant, because a quality-control inspector fired last month had reported completing the inspections without apparently doing the work.

According to a report filed Monday by Public Service Co. of N.H. with

the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, 33 percent of the welds in question are safety-related.

The report also stated that the falsification of records was limited to just the one employee fired four weeks ago for that offense. Officials refuse to identify the employee.

The report was based on information from Pullman-Higgins Co. of Williamsport, Pa., the pipe-fitting

and welding contractor that had hired the inspector.

"The contractor has completed statistical sampling of inspections performed by other inspectors and has determined the situation was restricted to one individual," said Public Service Co. of New Hampshire spokesman John Cavanaugh, reading a press release Tuesday.

PSNH is 35 percent owner of the Seabrook project.

Cavanaugh said the employee, who had worked for Pullman-Higgins for

Cont.

15 months, was involved in 2,408 examinations on 1,966 welded joints in piping, pipe braces and structural steel. Sixty-five percent of the welds were non-safety-related. 33 percent were safety-related and 2 percent were "other" types.

The employee allegedly filed reports on weld inspections when the work hadn't been done. He became suspect when he performed inspections alone that required attention of more than one individual, according to previous reports.

Pullman-Higgins is now completing a re-examination program of all the readily accessible welds checked by the inspector, regardless of their classification, according to Cavanaugh.

Those welds which are not readily accessible will be evaluated as to their "potential impact on safety," he said.

Cavanaugh said "anything that is safety-related will receive a thorough evaluation regardless of where it is located."

However, he would not go so far as to say all the safety-related welds at inaccessible locations will be inspected. "At this point, I can't (be sure)," Cavanaugh said.

The cost of the re-evaluation is being covered by Pullman-Higgins and the price tag will not be added to the total Seabrook project, now estimated at more than \$5 billion.

The re-examinations will not affect the scheduled completion dates of Units 1 and 2, according to Cavanaugh.

SAPL

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January 3, 1984

J. M. Felton, Director
Division of Rules and Records
Office of Administration
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D.C. 20555

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION
ACT REQUEST

FOIA-84-10

Rec'd 1-5-84

Due 1-19-84

Dear Mr. Felton:

This is a request under the Freedom of Information Act, as amended 5 U.S.C. § 552.

SAPL wishes to obtain information about the investigation and follow-up actions taken as a result of the discovery of falsified welding inspection reports by the Public Service Company of New Hampshire (PSNH) at the Seabrook Nuclear Power Plant. PSNH publicly announced the firing of a quality control inspector on May 5, 1983 as a consequence of this discovery. According to the company's announcement, 2400 piping and structural steel welds, some safety-related, needed to be re-inspected in Seabrook Unit 1.

Specifically, SAPL would like to be provided with the following: all internal NRC memoranda, particularly from the Office of Inspection and Enforcement, pertaining to this incident; the notification to the agency filed by Antone Cerne, the NRC senior resident inspector at the Seabrook site; the notification to the agency filed by PSNH; any reports that have been issued covering remedial actions taken; any recommendations of actions yet to be taken; the name and address of the employee charged with the record falsification; the specific area being inspected at the time of his discharge; the method by which this lapse in quality assurance was discovered.

The FOIA provides that if only portions of a file are exempted from release, the remainder must be released. SAPL therefore requests that it be provided with all non-exempt portions which are reasonably segregable. SAPL reserves its right to appeal the withholding or deletion of any of the material.

SAPL, though prepared to pay reasonable costs for the location and reproduction of the requested material, believes that this request is primarily of benefit to the public and therefore ought to be eligible for a fee waiver or reduction. This information is relevant to the issuance of an operating license for the plant and involves an issue that could have safety implications as far as the public is concerned. Hence, it is in the public interest that the information be released. Should there be a ruling against a fee waiver or reduction, please inform me if the fees will exceed \$15

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before proceeding to fill this request.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at the number on the letterhead. As the FOIA provides, I shall expect a reply within ten working days. Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Jane Doughty

Jane Doughty
Field Director

cc: Robert A. Backus, Esq.