



Missouri Public Service Commission

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April 19, 1984

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KENT M. RAGSDALE

General Counsel

Mr. Nunzio Palladino, Chairman
United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D.C. 20555

Re: NRC Caseload Forecast Program

Dear Mr. Palladino:

The Missouri Public Service Commission and Staff were dismayed to learn that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission is discontinuing the practice of sending caseload forecasting teams to nuclear construction sites.

The Missouri Public Service Commission has the statutory responsibility for the regulation of Kansas City Power and Light Company which owns a 47% interest in the Wolf Creek Generating Station and Union Electric Company which owns Callaway Plant Unit No. 1. Both Companies are seeking an operating license for authority to load fuel in their nuclear power plants sometime this year.

The Missouri Public Service Commission and Staff have found the independent caseload forecasts regarding project schedules very useful in estimating project costs, scheduling plant audits and preparing rate cases.

We urge the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to take the necessary steps to resume the caseload forecasts for Callaway Plant Unit No. 1 and Wolf Creek Generating Station.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

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A PDR

William D. Steinmeier
Chairman

WDS:ASC:nsh

cc: Commissioner Victor Gilinsky
Commissioner Thomas Roberts
Commissioner James Asselstine
Commissioner Frederick Bernthal
Missouri Congressional Delegation

NRC member to visit nuclear power plants

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — A Nuclear Regulatory Commission member will inspect nuclear power plants under construction in Missouri and Kansas next week in what are being called routine visits.

NRC commissioner James Asselstine on Monday will visit the Callaway Nuclear power plant near Fulton, Mo., and tour the Wolf Creek plant near Burlington, Kan. on Tuesday, said John Austin, a technical assistant to Asselstine.

Austin said intervenors who have raised safety questions about Wolf Creek during licensing hearings would accompany the commissioner during his tour there.

Intervenors' representative Mary Stephens will be present so "all parties have an opportunity to give Asselstine their information and know what information he is receiving," Austin said.

Asselstine may be accompanied by representatives of utility rate commissions in Missouri and Kansas, according to Austin. NRC deputy regional administrators responsible for the two plants also will go along on the tours as well as officials of the contractors and utilities building the plants.

Operating license hearings, held in January and February, focused on allegations by intervenors Wanda Christy and Mary Ellen Salava that emergency response plans were

inadequate to protect people living near Wolf Creek in the event of a serious nuclear accident.

Although invited to accompany Asselstine on the tour, Mrs. Christy and Mrs. Salava named Ms. Stephens to go in their place.

Austin said the commissioner, one of five on the NRC, is interested in visiting the nearly identical Callaway and Wolf Creek plants because of their standardized design. It will be "useful to see how these designs have been implemented," Austin said.

Asselstine's visit to Wolf Creek will come just days after Gov. John Carlin and the chairman of the Kansas Corporation Commission asked the NRC to reschedule a visit that was to have been made to the plant this week by an agency forecasting panel.

The panel was to gauge when Wolf Creek will be ready to load nuclear fuel, a key consideration in projecting the plant's ultimate costs. But the visit was called off when a key member of the team resigned to take a position outside the agency, and a new date has not been set.

Kansas City Power & Light Co., Kansas Gas and Electric Co. and Kansas Electric Power Cooperative Inc. are partners in Wolf Creek, which will cost at least \$2.7 billion and is scheduled to begin commercial operation next spring.

The \$2.85 billion Callaway plant, owned by Union Electric, is scheduled to go on line early next year.

J.C. News Tribune - P. 5 4-15-84

WOLF CREEK visitor fears for program

**NRC member says
he'll work to save
status inspections**

By Mitchel Benson
Financial Writer

BURLINGTON, Kan. — After touring the Wolf Creek nuclear power plant near here Tuesday, James K. Asselstine, a member of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, said he would work to save a threatened commission inspection program.

But he emphasized that he was speaking only for himself and that he and the four other commissioners had not yet discussed the construction status program that has been in limbo since a key NRC employee announced his resignation April 2.

"My personal view is that it is very valuable — in fact essential — for us to have that capability," the commissioner said at a news conference outside the grounds of the Wolf Creek power plant, which is under construction.

Mr. Asselstine was in Missouri on Monday and Kansas on Tuesday to tour the Callaway County and Wolf Creek nuclear power plants.

Under the construction status program, begun in the early 1970s, the regulatory agency assesses the construction schedules of nuclear power plants so that the agency can decide where and when to assign its own staff among the nuclear plants. The program's estimates also have been used as checks on construction timetables offered by the utilities building the power plants.

NRC spokesmen acknowledge, however, that the commission is considering abandoning the program because William Lovelace, the head of the NRC Caseload Forecast Panel, which does the assessments, resigned effective April 27 and the NRC so far has been unable to find a replacement.

The panel was scheduled to inspect the Wolf Creek plant last week, but

James K. Asselstine, a member of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, leaves the Wolf Creek nuclear power plant near Burlington,

the NRC canceled the inspection because of Mr. Lovelace's resignation. Mr. Asselstine told reporters that his visit had nothing to do with the uncertain status of the construction status program.

Michael Lennen, chairman of the Kansas Corporation Commission, and Kansas Gov. John Carlin have written letters to the NRC asking that the agency do a construction status inspection despite Mr. Lovelace's resignation. Neither official has received a response.

Stevi Stephens, director of the Nu-

clear Awareness Network, an anti-nuclear group in Lawrence, Kan., opposed to the Wolf Creek plant, said she was encouraged by Mr. Asselstine's comments but not optimistic that he could save the program.

"I think he's a good guy and well-intentioned. I think he's honest when he says it is an integral part of assessing the plants," said Ms. Stephens, who accompanied Mr. Asselstine on his tour of Wolf Creek. "But I think he probably is in the minority, as he generally is."

Ms. Stephens said that the five-

Kan., after touring the facility Tuesday. He expressed concern over the fate of the commission's construction status program.

member commission often splits three-to-two on its votes, with Mr. Asselstine and Commissioner Victor Gilinsky, the more consumer-oriented commissioners, finding themselves on the losing side.

Mr. Gilinsky is the only member remaining on the commission not to have been appointed by President Reagan. His term is scheduled to expire June 30.

Mr. Asselstine told reporters that he will check with the commission's staff on its efforts to fill Mr. Lovelace's position. "If I'm not satisfied

with the progress that's being made, then I will bring it to my colleagues' attention," the commissioner said.

At one point in the news conference Tuesday, Mr. Asselstine said he understood "that our staff would be taking another look at that (Wolf Creek construction schedule) at some point in the not-too-distant future, in terms of our own estimates."

But he said later that he could not guarantee that such an inspection would take place.



Keith Myer/Staff