

October 17, 1996

Mr. W. T. Subalusky, Jr.  
Site Vice President  
LaSalle County Station  
Commonwealth Edison Company  
2601 North 21st Road  
Marseilles, IL 61341

Dear Mr. Subalusky:

Enclosed for your review is the Systematic Assessment of Licensee Performance (SALP) 13 Report for the LaSalle County Nuclear Generating Station, covering the period November 27, 1994, through August 3, 1996. This report will be discussed with you at a public meeting to be held at 511 Commercial Street, Marseilles, IL (the Marseilles Lions Club) on October 29, 1996, at 1:00 p.m.

During this meeting you are encouraged to candidly discuss any comments you may have regarding our report.

In accordance with Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) policy, I have reviewed the results of the SALP Board assessment. The functional area of plant support was rated Category 2. The plant operations, maintenance and engineering areas were rated Category 3. These ratings reflect a decline in plant operations and engineering performance and improvement in plant support. I concur with the SALP Board assessment and its ratings.

It is my view that the conduct of nuclear activities in connection with the LaSalle facility was adequate and the facility was operated conservatively through most of the assessment period. While several actions were taken to improve performance, two persistent weaknesses limited the effectiveness of those actions. First, a large amount of emergent work and difficulties in planning and executing work hindered progress in the implementation of the station materiel condition improvement plan. Thus, materiel condition problems continued to challenge plant operators and led to reactor scrams and other forced outages. Second, human performance errors continued to result in unplanned plant shutdowns, inoperable safety equipment and loss of configuration control.

These continuing weaknesses in materiel condition and human performance resulted in a risk-significant service water tunnel fouling event that occurred near the end of the assessment period. This event provided the NRC a number of insights into the LaSalle County Station performance. That event showed that work controls had broken down, revealed previously unidentified materiel condition problems, and disclosed significant engineering weaknesses in support to plant operations. Thus, the actions during the service water event weighed heavily into NRC's assessment of the station's performance in the maintenance and engineering areas, and particularly in the operations area. While some performance improvement in the operations area was noted during the assessment period, plant management and staff focus on operational safety throughout this event was unsatisfactory resulting in considerable NRC intervention to assure proper actions were implemented.

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Self assessment activities were enhanced and resulted in the identification of some performance weaknesses. However, while some problems and performance weaknesses were being identified, the insights gained through station performance during the service water event were not disclosed through self assessments, and root cause determinations and associated corrective actions for identified deficiencies were not always effective.

At the SALP Meeting you should be prepared to discuss our assessments and plans to improve performance in the areas of plant operations, maintenance and engineering. The discussions should specifically address the issues of materiel condition, human performance, engineering involvement and self-assessment. Additionally, you are requested to respond in writing within 30 days after the meeting, specifically addressing corrective actions planned to improve your performance in the above areas.

In accordance with Section 2.790 of the NRC's "Rules of Practice," Part 2, Title 10, Code of Federal Regulations, a copy of this letter, the SALP report, and your response to this letter will be placed in the NRC's Public Document Room.

Should you have any questions concerning the SALP report, we would be pleased to discuss them with you.

Sincerely,

/s/A. Bill Beach

A. Bill Beach  
Regional Administrator

Docket No. 50-373

Docket No. 50-374

Enclosure: SALP 13  
Report No. 373;374/96001

See attached distribution

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