

September 13, 1996

Mr. James Knubel
Vice President and Director - TMI
GPU Nuclear Corporation
Post Office Box 480
Middletown, PA 17057-0480

Dear Mr. Knubel:

SUBJECT: THREE MILE ISLAND, UNIT 1 - SYSTEMATIC ASSESSMENT OF LICENSEE
PERFORMANCE (SALP) REPORT NO. 50-289/96-99

This letter forwards the SALP report for the Three Mile Island Nuclear Station, Unit 1, for the period of February 19, 1995 through August 3, 1996. This assessment was conducted using the SALP process that was implemented by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) on July 19, 1993. In this process, the NRC staff rates the performance of licensees in four functional areas: Operations, Engineering, Maintenance, and Plant Support. The Plant Support area comprises radiological controls, emergency preparedness, security, fire protection, chemistry, and housekeeping.

Overall, the NRC continued to observe good safety performance at the Three Mile Island Plant, Unit 1. Performance continued to be strong in the Maintenance area and improved performance was noted in the Operations area; however, performance declined in the areas of Engineering and Plant Support due in part to poor management oversight of program implementation in several areas. The problem identification and corrective action processes were generally effective in identifying, evaluating and correcting material deficiencies and human performance. However, weak interim corrective actions for a job planning process deficiency resulted in a repetitive breach of security during maintenance activities. In addition, human performance errors in more than one functional area occurred which may have been avoided if self-checking activities (i.e. the BE SURE program) were more consistently implemented across the station. The event capture system generally met its objectives, but needs management's continued attention to improve the mixed level of quality in the evaluation process. The TMI safety oversight committees were effective in critically assessing safety performance and were a significant addition to the station's self-assessment process. TMI's programs for reviewing operating experience feedback were good and supported by management.

Performance in the area of Operations was rated Category 1. Management oversight of emerging plant operational issues was excellent and was a significant improvement. Senior plant management shifted toward a very conservative decision-making process with the proper emphasis on plant and personnel safety. Licensed operator performance and training were strengths. Operations activities conducted during the refueling outage were very well planned with improvement noted from the previous outage. The senior reactor operators exhibited mixed performance related to the evaluation of degraded technical specification equipment. Human performance evaluation was made a high priority by senior management.

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Performance in the area of Maintenance was rated Category 1. Maintenance and surveillance activities continued to be well performed with a well trained staff and appropriate management involvement. Some personnel errors and weaknesses in the planning process occurred but improvement was noted toward the end of the assessment period. Several of these errors may have been prevented through better self-checking.

Performance in the area of Engineering was rated Category 2. Engineering communications and planning have remained strengths. The quality of design change activities and engineering's response to technical issues declined from the last SALP in that it varied significantly. Engineering performance in programmatic activities also declined. Performance in design basis documentation and updated final safety analysis report (UFSAR) updating programs was very good; however, performance in oversight of the motor-operated valve testing program exhibited significant weaknesses.

Performance in the area of Plant Support was rated Category 2. The radiation protection program was effectively implemented, including successful performance noted in review of ALARA program results. However, some radiation worker performance issues were noted in adhering to high radiation area controls and contamination monitoring. Security performance declined as indicated by two occurrences involving problems with maintaining the integrity of protected area barriers. The emergency preparedness program performance was good; however, performance during the last full participation exercise was mixed.

The enclosure to this letter provides the current plan for NRC inspections of your facility for the next year. We will inform you of any changes required to the attached inspection schedule. The routine resident inspection effort is not included in this schedule, except for inspections which will focus on areas of noted weakness.

We have scheduled a management meeting with you that will be open to the public observation at 1:00 p.m. on September 30, 1996. At the meeting, you should be prepared to discuss our assessment and any initiatives you plan to take to address the concerns and weaknesses identified in the SALP report.

We appreciate your cooperation.

Sincerely,

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY: W. Kane

Hubert J. Miller
Regional Administrator

Enclosures: 1. SALP Report No. 50-289/96-99
2. 12 Month Inspection Plan for Three Mile Island Unit 1

cc w/encl:

E. L. Blake, Shaw, Pittman, Potts and Trowbridge (Legal Counsel for GPUN)

Mr. James Knubel

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E. L. Blake, Shaw, Pittman, Potts and Trowbridge (Legal Counsel for GPUN)
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
J. C. Fornicola, Director, Licensing and Regulatory Affairs
M. J. Ross, Director, Operations and Maintenance
TMI-Alert (TMIA)
J. S. Wetmore, Manager, TMI Regulatory Affairs

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*SEE FOLLOWING PAGE FOR COOPER'S CONCURRENCE

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