

September 20, 1996

DCD

EA 96-271

E. Thomas Boulette, PhD
Senior Vice President - Nuclear
Boston Edison Company
Pilgrim Nuclear Power Station
600 Rocky Hill Road
Plymouth, Massachusetts 02360-5599

SUBJECT: PILGRIM SPECIAL INSPECTION REPORT NO. 50-293/96-07

Dear Mr. Boulette:

This letter refers to the special inspection conducted from July 8-12, 1996, and July 22-26, 1996, at the Pilgrim Nuclear Power Station, Plymouth, Massachusetts. The purpose of the inspection was to determine whether activities authorized by the license were conducted safely, and in accordance with NRC requirements. At the September 3, 1996, telephone exit meeting, the findings were discussed with you and other members of your staff.

The inspection was directed toward areas important to public health and safety. The areas examined during this inspection included: (1) your corrective actions after you identified potentially inoperable primary containment as documented in Licensee Event Report 96-04; (2) your corrective actions in the environmental qualification program in response to the post-accident environment changes in the primary containment because of elevated service water temperature; and (3) your corrective actions for resolving two previously identified electrical unresolved items. The inspection consisted of selected examinations of design documentation, procedures and representative records, personnel interviews, and review of the actions taken by your staff to address these issues.

Based on the results of this inspection, one apparent violation was identified and is being considered for escalated enforcement action in accordance with the "General Statement of Policy and Procedure for NRC Enforcement Actions" (Enforcement Policy) (60 FR 34381; June 30, 1995). Boston Edison had failed to promptly identify and correct the deficient condition involving 12 improperly set breakers that provided protection to the electrical containment penetrations. This improper breaker setting compromised the overcurrent protection for the electrical penetrations. Under certain high impedance fault conditions, this improper setting could have led to damage to an electrical containment penetration, and thus damage to the primary containment. No Notice of Violation is presently being issued for these inspection findings. In addition, be advised that the number and characterization of the apparent violation described in the enclosed inspection report may change as a result of further NRC review.

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A predecisional enforcement conference to discuss the apparent violation is scheduled for October 3, 1996. The decision to hold a predecisional enforcement conference does not mean that the NRC has determined that a violation has occurred or that enforcement action will be taken. The conference is being held to obtain information to enable the NRC to make an enforcement decision, such as a common understanding of the facts, root causes, missed opportunities to identify the apparent violations sooner, corrective actions, significance of the issues, and the need for lasting and effective corrective action. In addition, this is an opportunity for you to point out any errors in our inspection report and for you to provide any information concerning your perspectives on: (1) the severity of the apparent violation, (2) the application of the factors that the NRC considers when it determines the amount of a civil penalty that may be assessed in accordance with Section VI.B.2 of the Enforcement Policy, and (3) any other application of the Enforcement Policy to this case, including the exercise of discretion in accordance with Section VII.

You will be advised by separate correspondence of the results of our deliberations on this matter. No response regarding these apparent violations is required at this time.

In accordance with 10 CFR 2.790 of the NRC's "Rules of Practice," a copy of this letter and its enclosure will be placed in the NRC Public Document Room.

Sincerely,

James T. Wiggins, Director
Division of Reactor Safety

Docket No. 50-293

cc w/encl:

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E. Thomas Boulette, PhD

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