

September 17, 1991

MEMORANDUM FOR: RECORD

FROM: James M. Taylor  
Executive Director for Operations

SUBJECT: DROP-IN VISIT - NORTHEAST UTILITIES (NU)

On September 10, 1991, Messrs. W. B. (Bill) Ellis and B. M. (Bernie) Fox of Northeast Utilities met with Messrs. T. Murley, J. Scinto, L. Chandler, J. Partlow, G. Mazetis and J. Taylor to discuss items of mutual interest. Included in the discussion were the status of the purchase of Seabrook by NU, responsiveness of NU to performance concerns (SALP, allegations status), and the Millstone Unit 2 new steam generators purchase.

Mr. Fox indicated that the new steam generators for Millstone Unit 2 were now on-site. The plans are to replace the steam generators during the 1992 refueling outage. A 135-day outage was mentioned as the current target, with their intentions to draw upon available insights from similar experiences on Palisades.

With regard to the purchase of Seabrook, Mr. Fox discussed a recent action taken by NU to provide interim financing to DUA Power Corporation, a part owner of Seabrook who went bankrupt. The indication was that this is short-term...over the next year or so.

Both Mr. Ellis and Mr. Fox provided extensive discussion about their sensitivity to adverse indications of NU performance. They indicated a commitment to a constructive resolution of ongoing issues. Mr. Ellis stressed that they wanted to achieve a good performance, and specifically mentioned existing SALP concerns. Mr. Ellis acknowledged their recent Enforcement Conference history. Mr. Ellis also acknowledged the other issues pertaining to personnel errors, compliance matters on procedures, and the extensive allegations. He indicated that the ongoing assessments by the NU Task Groups are being listened to, and asserted later in his conversation that NU was prepared to reorganize if this was deemed to be the recommendation of the Task Groups.

Mr. Ellis discussed the large volume of allegations, mentioning NU's programmatic approach to addressing them and determining root causes. Mr. Ellis stated that more resources were being committed by NU, referring to their Nuclear Safety Concerns Board as an indication of this commitment. Mr. Ellis also indicated an objective to get back to a more "normal" rate of allegation submittals. He also expressed a concern that their efforts to correct these areas could be interpreted by some to be harassment.

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Mr. Taylor concluded the meeting by indicating that we were pleased that NU came in to describe their overall plans. We plan to continue funneling much of the burden of resolution back to NU for the present. Mr. Fox commented that they believed that the communications of NU with the Region and Headquarters has been enhanced. Mr. Fox added that NU regretted the additional technical burden being placed on the NRC staff.

The meeting adjourned at 3:00pm. No regulatory decisions were requested or made.

James M. Taylor