

October 30, 1996

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 INSPECTION REPORT 50-293/96-06

Dear Mr. Boulette:

On September 23, 1996, the NRC completed an inspection at the Pilgrim Nuclear Power Station in Plymouth, Massachusetts. The enclosed report presents the results of that inspection.

During the eight weeks of this inspection period, the conduct of activities at the Pilgrim facility was characterized by safe reactor operation through conservative decision making. We observed conservative decision making when your staff performed an unplanned shutdown when an operator on rounds astutely identified a leak on the "B" reactor building closed cooling water heat exchanger on September 17. Although technical specifications allowed the "B" loop of containment cooling to be inoperable for 72 hours, your staff elected to commence a plant shutdown immediately after determining that the repair could not be performed on line. Your staff also planned and executed reactor core power suppression testing to locate an extremely small reactor fuel pin leak. After successfully identifying the suspect fuel cell, the protective action of fully inserting three control rods suppressed local power to mitigate the effects of the leak. Lastly, the operations and plant managers' direction to lower reactor power to 70%, after the loss of one 345 KV offsite line during Hurricane Edouard, to mitigate the effects of the resultant transient if the other 345 KV offsite power line was lost, demonstrated a good focus on nuclear safety.

Based on the results of this inspection, one violation, with several examples, of NRC requirements was identified. The issue involved conditions adverse to quality that were not promptly identified and corrected. One aspect of the violation dealt with the failure of the corrective action process and your organization to identify a broad procedure usage and adequacy issue at Pilgrim which was a condition adverse to quality since at least April 1995. During this inspection period, a licensed operator left a safety related valve out of position due to not following the procedure. Another aspect of the violation involved the accuracy of the Rockwell Hardness Tester in 1995. Members of your staff relied on verbal advice over the telephone from a vendor rather than notifying the BECo measurement and test equipment personnel or initiating a problem report to resolve a calibration problem. As of the end of this inspection, the ramifications of a related issue with the accuracy of a BECo calibration block used to calibrate the hardness tester had not yet been evaluated.

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In the area of procedure adherence and adequacy, we received your June 17, 1996 response to our concerns that were raised in NRC Inspection Report 50-293/96-80. We considered this overall response adequate, but weak in certain instances, in that it did not communicate a clear, integrated plan to correct the identified problems. Also, no specific date for completion of all corrective actions was cited.

You are required to respond to this letter and should follow the instructions specified in the enclosed Notice when preparing your response. In your response, you should document the specific actions taken and any additional actions you plan to prevent recurrence. Your response may reference or include previous docketed correspondence if the correspondence adequately addresses the required response. In particular, you may rely on the corrective actions and improvements already described in your July 17, 1996 letter, but you should also address the weaknesses of that response and include a summary the results of your common cause analysis on the procedure adequacy and adherence problems. After reviewing your response to this Notice, including your proposed corrective actions and the results of future inspections, the NRC will determine whether further enforcement action is necessary to ensure compliance with NRC regulatory requirements. We believe it would be mutually beneficial to hold a management meeting in Region I on your improvements in this area after you submit your response to this letter.

In accordance with 10 CFR 2.790 of the NRC's "Rules of Practice," a copy of this letter and its enclosures will be placed in the NRC Public Document Room (PDR). To the extent possible, your response should not include any personal privacy, proprietary, or safeguards information so that it can be placed in the PDR without redaction.

The responses directed by this letter and the enclosed Notice are not subject to the clearance procedures of the Office of Management and Budget as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1980, Pub. L. No. 96.511.

Your cooperation with us is appreciated.

Sincerely,

Original Signed By:

Richard Cooper, Director
Division of Reactor Projects

Docket No.: 50-293
License No.: DPR-35

Enclosures:

1. Notice of Violation
2. Inspection Report 50-293/96-06

cc w/encl:

L. Olivier, Vice President - Nuclear and Station Director

T. Sullivan, Plant Manager

N. Desmond, Regulatory Relations

D. Tarantino, Nuclear Information Manager

R. Hallisey, Department of Public Health, Commonwealth of Massachusetts

The Honorable Therese Murray

The Honorable Linda Teagan

B. Abbanat, Department of Public Utilities

Chairman, Plymouth Board of Selectmen

Chairman, Duxbury Board of Selectmen

Chairman, Nuclear Matters Committee

Plymouth Civil Defense Director

Paul W. Gromer, Massachusetts Secretary of Energy Resources

James Shaer, Legislative Assistant

J. Fleming

A. Nogee, MASSPIRG

Regional Administrator, FEMA

Office of the Commissioner, Massachusetts Department of Environmental Quality
Engineering

Office of the Attorney General, Commonwealth of Massachusetts

T. Rapone, Massachusetts Executive Office of Public Safety

Chairman, Citizens Urging Responsible Energy

Commonwealth of Massachusetts, SLO Designee

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