

50-498/499



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

December 13, 1996

Mr. William T. Cottle
Executive Vice-President &
General Manager, Nuclear
Houston Lighting & Power Company
South Texas Project Electric
Generating Station
P. O. Box 289
Wadsworth, TX 77483

SUBJECT: DRAFT NUREG-1560, "INDIVIDUAL PLANT EXAMINATION PROGRAM:
PERSPECTIVES ON REACTOR SAFETY AND PLANT PERFORMANCE, SUMMARY
REPORT," - REQUEST FOR COMMENTS

Dear Mr. Cottle:

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) has published a draft of "Individual Plant Examination Program: Perspectives on Reactor Safety and Plant Performance, Summary Report," NUREG-1560. Draft NUREG-1560 is comprised of two volumes. Volume 1 (Part 1) provides an overall summary of the key perspectives. Volume 2 (Parts 2 through 5) provides a more in-depth discussion of the perspectives summarized in Part 1. This report summarizes the insights and findings from our review of the Individual Plant Examinations (IPEs) submitted to the NRC in response to Generic Letter 88-20. A copy of this draft NUREG was recently mailed to your organization for review and comment. The distribution to your organization included: the Plant Managers of the nuclear plants for which you are responsible, the licensee-identified contacts at those plants, and a nuclear executive. Notification of the availability of the NUREG for public comment was also published in the Federal Register on November 14, 1996 (61 FR 58249).

The purpose of this letter is to bring to your attention the availability of this report. We would appreciate any comments you may have as discussed below; however, any response to this letter is voluntary. If you require an additional copy of the report, you may request one by writing to Distribution Services, Printing, Graphics and Mail Services Branch, Office of Administration, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001.

Draft NUREG-1560 is based entirely on docketed information submitted to the NRC in conjunction with the IPE program. NUREG-1560 is published as a draft for comment, partly because the staff recognizes that most licensees have updated their IPEs and have made hardware and procedural/operational modifications that have not been reflected in the docketed information. As part of any comments on Part 1, updated information regarding your IPE(s) would be appreciated.

Chapter 8 of Volume 1 of NUREG-1560 discusses the potential need for followup regulatory activities by the NRC based on IPE insights. Comments on those activities would also be helpful.

In addition, comparisons among plants are provided in Volume 1. Although only a few licensees identified vulnerabilities and no common vulnerabilities were

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identified, the NRC review identified several vulnerabilities as perhaps being applicable to many BWRs or PWRs. Your insights about your plant or plants in light of these global perspectives are also welcome.

The staff, in its review of the IPEs, pursued five major objectives in documenting perspectives from the reviews:

- (1) The impact of the IPE program on reactor safety, including the number and type of vulnerabilities or other safety issues that have been identified and the safety enhancements that have been implemented.
- (2) Plant-specific features and assumptions that play a significant role in the estimation of core damage frequency (CDF) and the analysis of containment performance.
- (3) The importance of the operator's role in CDF estimation and containment performance analysis.
- (4) The potential role of the IPEs in risk-informed regulation, given the limited scope of the staff's review.
- (5) General perspectives: (a) the implication of the IPE results relative to the current risk level of U.S. plants compared with the Commission's Safety Goals, (b) the improvements that have been identified as a result of implementation of the Station Blackout Rule, and (c) comparison of the IPE results with NUREG-1150.

Response to this letter is voluntary. Please mail any comments on Draft NUREG-1560 (Volumes 1 and 2) by February 14, 1997, to Mary Drouin, Office of Nuclear Regulatory Research, Mail Stop T-10-E50, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001. For further information, contact Mr. Edward Chow, Office of Nuclear Regulatory Research on (301) 415-6571.

Prior to finalizing NUREG-1560, a 3-day workshop will be held April 7-9, 1997, in Austin, Texas, to address comments and answer questions. Information on the workshop location, agenda, registration, etc., will be published in the Federal Register in mid-December 1996, with notification of availability of Volume 2, Parts 2 through 5, of Draft NUREG-1560. Workshop attendance information should be directed to Martha Lucero, Sandia National Laboratories, telephone (505) 845-9787, fax (505) 844-1392, E-mail mlucero@sandia.gov.

Sincerely,

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY: A. Thadani for
Frank J. Miraglia, Acting Director
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket No(s): 50-498 and 50-499

cc: See next page

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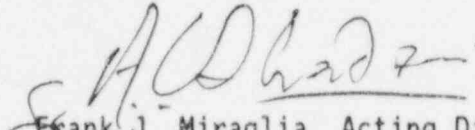
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Sincerely,


Frank J. Miraglia, Acting Director
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

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