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UNITED STATES  
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

REGION III  
801 WARRENVILLE ROAD  
LISLE, ILLINOIS 60532-4351

January 22, 1997

Mr. H. G. Stanley  
Site Vice President  
Braidwood Station  
Commonwealth Edison Company  
RR #1, Box 84  
Braceville, IL 60407

SUBJECT: SPECIAL INSPECTION REPORT NO. 50-456/96018 AND NOTICE OF VIOLATION

Dear Mr. Stanley:

This refers to the special safety inspection conducted on October 12 through November 13, 1996, to assess the unplanned opening of the pressurizer power operated relief valve during a cooldown on Braidwood Unit 1. At the conclusion of the inspection, the findings were discussed with Mr. T. Tulon, plant manager and other members of your staff identified in the enclosed report.

Our inspection concluded that the actual opening of the pressurizer power operated relief valve created minimal threat to the public safety, plant workers or to the plant and that the investigations your staff performed of the event were prompt and thorough. However, lifting a pressurizer relief valve was a challenge to the integrity of the reactor coolant system pressure boundary creating the threat of a potential loss of coolant accident. We are concerned about the broad spectrum of circumstances that led to the event including the lack of appropriate procedural guidance, the lack of safety consideration in the nonconservative cooldown evolution that appeared to be schedule driven, the operation with a degraded charging flow control valve exhibiting erratic behavior at low flow conditions for an extended period of time without any corrective action until this event, and what appeared to be the lack of good communications in several instances.

Based on the results of this inspection, the NRC concluded that a violation of NRC requirements occurred as cited in the enclosed Notice of Violation (Notice). You are required to respond to this violation. The circumstances surrounding the violation are described in detail in the inspection report.

Because of the complexity of the issue and the potential safety consequences, a management meeting to discuss this violation and the related circumstances has been scheduled for 10:00 a.m. (CST) on January 27, 1997, at the NRC Region III office in Lisle, Illinois. This meeting is being held as an opportunity for you to provide any insights that may not be apparent in the inspection report, to discuss your corrective actions, and to provide any additional information that you deem necessary. This meeting will be open to public observation.

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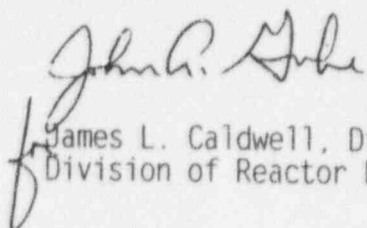
H. Stanley

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In accordance with 10 CFR 2.790 of the Commission's regulations, a copy of this letter, with enclosures, and your response will be placed in the NRC Public Document Room.

We will gladly discuss any questions you have concerning this inspection.

Sincerely,

  
James L. Caldwell, Director  
Division of Reactor Projects

Docket No.: 50-456  
License No: NPF-72

Enclosures:

1. Notice of Violation
2. Inspection Report  
No. 50-456/96018;
3. Event Timeline

cc w/encl:

- T. J. Maiman, Senior Vice President  
Nuclear Operations Division
- D. A. Sager, Vice President,  
Generation Support
- H. W. Keiser, Chief Nuclear  
Operating Officer
- T. Tulon, Station Manager
- T. Simpkin, Regulatory  
Assurance Supervisor
- I. Johnson, Acting Nuclear  
Regulatory Services Manager
- Richard Hubbard
- Nathan Schloss, Economist  
Office of the Attorney General  
State Liaison Officer
- Chairman, Illinois Commerce  
Commission
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