

From: PAUL M. BLANCH <PMBLANCH@ix.netcom.com>
To: John Zwolinski <JAZ@nrc.gov>
Date: 8/2/96 6:04am
Subject: CY

John:

How can you let the restart with all the open items we have identified such as the setpoints and the issues raised by Stankowski? Is the political pressure too much? These are major safety issues!

From the Hartford COurant 8/2/96

A critical report issued by federal inspectors Thursday about licensing and engineering operations at the Connecticut Yankee nuclear power plant in Haddam, will not delay the plant's planned Aug. 11 reopening.

"I don't believe it will have any impact on their efforts to restart. That will be handled separately," said Victor Dricks, a spokesman for the federal

Nuclear Regulatory Commission's regional office in King of Prussia, Pa.

The report by a special NRC inspection team, found that engineering calculations and analyses of key safety systems at Connecticut Yankee were incomplete or incorrect.

The team also found that sections of the plant's updated final safety analysis report were in error and that changes to the report had not been evaluated properly.

Many of the same problems were identified previously by Northeast Utilities in a report to the NRC. NU owns a portion of Connecticut Yankee and operates it for the consortium of utility owners.

"The NRC's findings in this very thorough inspection dovetail with what we are currently doing to improve operations at Connecticut Yankee," said

Jere LaPlatney, plant director.

Anthony Nericcio, a Connecticut Yankee spokesman, said a quick review of the 106-page report found no surprises. "The next step is to review this in detail and make sure there is nothing in here that would prevent us from restarting."

Similar, but more extensive documentation problems were identified by NU and the NRC at the Millstone 1 nuclear power plant and the other two Millstone plants. The Waterford reactors are on the NRC's watch list of the most troubled nuclear plants and shut down until the NRC authorizes them to restart.

Dricks said the report "clearly identifies some concerns that we

have, but none of those concerns are serious enough to raise questions about whether

[Northeast Utilities] can operate the plant safely. We believe they can. But they are matters that need to be addressed in the future."

Connecticut Yankee shut down July 23 for repairs after an engineering analysis showed that piping in a critical fan cooling system inside the containment building might not be able to withstand the stress of a water hammer. A water hammer is the vibration in water pipes caused by air pockets in the water flow.

To keep those air pockets from forming when the water flow is interrupted by a loss of power, three diesel-driven water pumps are being installed.

Two will be connected directly to the fan cooling piping. The third will be a standby unit, Nericcio said.

He said work on the system is under way and plans call for the plant to restart Aug. 11, reaching full power Aug. 13.

The plant is critical to providing uninterrupted electric service in Connecticut this summer because the three Millstone nuclear power plants - which

normally provide nearly half the electricity used in the state - have been shut down indefinitely by safety concerns.

Without Connecticut Yankee, the margin between available supplies and anticipated peak demand is very slim, raising the likelihood of voltage reductions, or brownouts, and even rolling two-hour blackouts during an extended heat wave.

"As things currently stand, they can restart as soon as they want, as long as they can demonstrate the operability of that system," Dricks said. But the

NRC might need to take some action "depending on the nature of the technical fix."

A four-member inspection team reviewing the system is now at the plant. They were sent by Shirley Jackson, NRC chairwoman, at the request of Connecticut Sens. Chris Dodd and Joseph Lieberman.

The 100-page report issued Thursday was based on an extensive inspection of Connecticut Yankee between March 11 and April 26.

The team found weaknesses in procedures used to ensure the plant is maintained according to its license. The team also found weaknesses in the procedures used to identify, evaluate and correct problems.

According to the executive summary, the team "identified a number of significant deficiencies in the engineering calculations and analyses which were

relied upon to ensure the adequacy of the design of key safety systems."

Deficiencies were found in the calculations and analyses of station batteries, emergency diesel generators, containment air recirculation system, service

water system and in a combination of systems and components needed to support the emergency core cooling system.

"These deficiencies revealed significant weaknesses in the defense-in-depth principles that the NRC relies upon to ensure that nuclear power plant

operation does not jeopardize the health and safety of the public," said William T. Russell, director of the NRC's Office of Nuclear Reactor

Regulation, in a letter to Ted Feigenbaum, NU's executive vice president and chief nuclear officer.

Russell also told Feigenbaum that the inspection noted "apparent violations of NRC's requirements" which are being considered for escalated enforcement action, although no violation notice was being issued as a result of the report.

Escalated enforcement could result in fines or other penalties against NU.

The apparent violations will be discussed by the NRC and NU in a conference to be scheduled in about three weeks, Russell said. The scheduling of

the conference, however, "does not mean the NRC has determined that a violation has occurred or that enforcement actions will be taken," he said.