

50-309



UNITED STATES  
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

January 31, 1997

Mr. Edward Myers  
P.O. Box 551  
Damariscotta, ME 04543

Dear Mr. Myers:

I am responding to your letter to Chairman Jackson dated December 23, 1996, in which you requested that the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) ensure that Maine Yankee Atomic Power Company (MYAPCo) checks and confirms that all the plant wiring is in good order prior to the restart of Maine Yankee. In addition, you expressed concern over the large number of deficiencies that the Independent Safety Assessment Team (ISAT) reviewed during the inspection at Maine Yankee. You also questioned the adequacy of Maine Yankee's financial commitment toward resolving its problems.

Subsequent to the issuance of the ISAT report in October 1996, the NRC staff has conducted numerous inspections to confirm compliance with NRC rules and regulations. Concurrently, the licensee is pursuing resolution of ISAT findings. Recently, while conducting reviews associated with the NRC's Generic Letter 96-01, "Testing of Safety-Related Logic Circuits," the licensee discovered a separation problem with control wiring associated with the redundant trains of reactor manual trip push buttons. Conformance with certain industry electrical standards could not be verified and, thus, the licensee shut down Maine Yankee on December 5, 1996, to resolve this safety concern.

On December 18, 1996, the NRC issued a Confirmatory Action Letter (CAL) to MYAPCo, the licensee for Maine Yankee, documenting its agreement to undertake the following actions prior to restarting the facility:

- Complete testing of safety-related logic circuits pursuant to NRC Generic Letter No. 96-01.
- Develop a plan and methodology for expanding its review to determine the extent of the cable separation problems at the facility.
- Perform root cause evaluations that will address all hardware deficiencies identified, and utilize this information to validate the comprehensiveness of its corrective actions.
- Meet with NRC representatives to describe the results and conclusions, as they pertain to the actions described above, and to gain the NRC's agreement that Maine Yankee is sufficiently prepared to restart the facility.

Further inspections and licensing activities have revealed several additional technical concerns in the electrical and equipment qualification areas. These recently-identified concerns have been incorporated into a supplement to the CAL and will also be the subject of a public meeting between the licensee and the staff prior to plant restart.

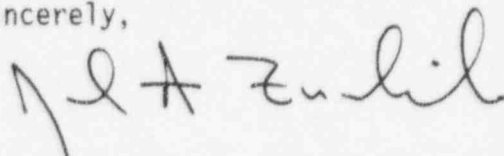
Your letter also referred to 3200 deficiencies noted by the ISAT. I believe that you are referring to the licensee's backlog of corrective actions discussed in section 4.2.2, page 65 of the ISAT report issued by the NRC in October 1996. The licensee's process for resolving identified problems was fragmented into approximately 21 individual, non-integrated corrective action tracking systems. The backlog of corrective actions was relatively large and was increasing. The ISAT's concern was that the process for resolving these licensee-identified corrective actions has been weak, resulting in untimely resolution, despite past efforts by the licensee to improve the process. The licensee is adopting a single process, termed "The Learning Process," to integrate corrective actions. The NRC will continue to monitor and audit the licensee's corrective action resolution process. The NRC has stressed to the licensee the importance that it determine the root causes of these weaknesses and take broad corrective actions.

Additionally, the licensee in its December 10, 1996, response to the ISAT report states, "Maine Yankee is also taking steps to improve material condition, such as issuing guidelines for identification of material condition problems and establishing teams to reduce maintenance backlogs to minimal levels." A followup of the effectiveness of these activities will be conducted by the NRC staff in February 1997.

With respect to your concern about the financial commitment of MYAPCo, the licensee has addressed this concern in its letter of December 10, 1996. The staff is evaluating the licensee's submittal and is closely observing Maine Yankee activities to assess whether plant safety decisions are being compromised by economic considerations. The most recent shutdown, as a result of cable separation issues, provides the staff an opportunity to critically evaluate these concerns.

I trust you will find the actions regarding cable separation and the planned inspection on corrective actions responsive to your concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "John A. Zwolinski". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "Z".

John A. Zwolinski, Deputy Director  
Division of Reactor Projects - I/II  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

DISTRIBUTION: for letter to E. Myers dated January 31, 1997.

DOCKET File (50-309 w/original incoming)

PUBLIC (w/incoming)

EDO Reading (#G960979)

HThompson

SCollins

JBlaha

FMiraglia

AThadani

RZimmerman

TMartin

PDI-3 Plant (w/incoming)

SVarga

JZwolinski

MBoyle (email MLB4)

JMoore, OGC

HMiller, R-I

~~JRogge, R-I~~ RConte

OPA

OCA

CNorsworthy

January 31, 1997

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Sincerely,

(Original Signed By)

John A. Zwolinski, Deputy Director  
Division of Reactor Projects - I/II  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

\*see previous concurrences

G:\G960979.LTR

PM:DRPE*	LA:DRPE*	D:DRPE*	ADPR*	D:NRR*	EDO*	OGC	OCM
BMozafari	JZowski	SVarga	RZimmerman	FMiraglia	HThompson		SJackson
01/27/97	01/24/97	01/24/97	1/28/97	1/28/97	1/30/97	1/ /97	01/31/97
Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No

OFFICIAL RECORD COPY

*Ruehert/Moravari*  
**ACTION**

EDO Principal Correspondence Control

FROM:

DUE: 01/15/97

EDO CONTROL: G960979

DOC DT: 12/23/96

FINAL REPLY:

Edward Myers  
Damariscotta, ME

TO:

Chairman Jackson

FOR SIGNATURE OF :

\*\* PRI \*\*

CRC NO: 96-1291

Miraglia

DESC:

ROUTING:

MAINE YANKEE

Taylor  
Milhoan  
Thompson  
Blaha  
Miller, RI

DATE: 01/02/97

ASSIGNED TO:

CONTACT:

NRR

Miraglia

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS OR REMARKS:

Put EDO and Chairman on for concurrence.  
Chairman's Office to review response prior  
to dispatch.

NRR RECEIVED: JANUARY 2, 1997

NRR ACTION: DRPE:VARGA

NRR ROUTING: MIRAGLIA  
THADANI  
ZIMMERMAN  
SHERON  
TRAVERS  
MARTIN  
BOHRER

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
CORRESPONDENCE CONTROL TICKET

PAPER NUMBER: CRC-96-1291                      LOGGING DATE: Dec 27 96

ACTION OFFICE: EDO

AUTHOR: EDWARD MYERS  
AFFILIATION: MAINE

ADDRESSEE: CHAIRMAN JACKSON

LETTER DATE: Dec 23 96                      FILE CODE: ID&R 5 MAINE YANKEE

SUBJECT: MAINE YANKEE

ACTION: Direct Reply

DISTRIBUTION: CHAIRMAN

SPECIAL HANDLING: NONE

CONSTITUENT:

NOTES: CHAIRMAN'S OFFICE TO REVIEW RESPONSE PRIOR TO  
DISPATCH

DATE DUE: Jan 16 97

SIGNATURE:                      DATE SIGNED:  
AFFILIATION:

EDO -- G960979