

50-309



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

February 6, 1997

Mr. Jay Janney  
121 Town Hall Rd.  
Edgecomb, ME 04556

Dear Mr. Janney:

I am responding to your letter to Chairman Jackson dated December 31, 1996, in which you expressed concerns regarding the safety of Maine Yankee. The NRC staff likewise has concerns regarding certain safety equipment, and, as a consequence, the plant is currently required to be shut down until the technical issues are adequately resolved.

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
- Address cable separation problems
- Perform root cause evaluations
- Meet with NRC staff

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, to be held in the vicinity of the site, between the licensee and the staff prior to plant restart.

In January senior NRC managers met to discuss the performance of selected nuclear power plants across the country. This meeting, termed the Senior Management Meeting (SMM), affords senior managers an opportunity to critically assess power plant performance. The results of the SMM were presented to the Commission on January 29, 1997. At the Commission meeting it was announced that Maine Yankee is considered a Category 2 plant. Plants in this category have been identified as having weaknesses that warrant increased NRC attention until the licensee demonstrates a period of improved performance.

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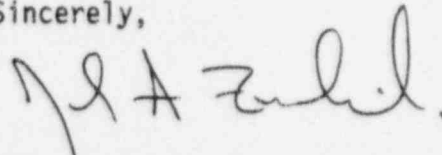
Mr. J. Janney

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Additionally on February 4, 1997, Chairman Jackson and her fellow Commissioners held a meeting, at NRC Headquarters, with senior Maine Yankee management, NRC staff and several members of the public to discuss the safety performance concerns associated with Maine Yankee.

Please be assured that the above initiatives are indicative of the level of NRC attention being placed on closely monitoring the licensee's corrective actions. The NRC will decide, prior to restart, whether the licensee's corrective actions provide reasonable assurance that the plant will be operated in a manner that will pose no undue risk to public health and safety. If you have any additional questions regarding safe operation of Maine Yankee, please do not hesitate to let me know at 301-415-1453.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "John A. Zwolinski". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "John" being the most prominent part.

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

Mr. J. Janney

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Sincerely,

(Original Signed By)

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

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