

DOD/DCB

February 4, 1997

EA 96-530

Mr. E. Kraft, Site Vice President
Quad Cities Station
Commonwealth Edison Company
22710 206th Avenue North
Cordova, IL 61242

SUBJECT: NRC INSPECTION REPORTS 50-254/96019(DRP) AND 50-265/96019(DRP)

Dear Mr. Kraft:

On November 26, 1996, the NRC completed a special inspection at your Quad Cities Nuclear Power Station facilities. The enclosed report presents the results of that inspection.

Based on the results of this inspection, two apparent violations were identified and are being considered for escalated enforcement action in accordance with the "General Statement of Policy and Procedure for NRC Enforcement Actions" (Enforcement Policy), NUREG-1600. The first apparent violation involves the failure to maintain the reactor building blow-out panels in accordance with the design basis. This failure resulted in: (1) a number of damaged blow-out panel bolts existing for an extended period of time, and (2) installation of pipe supports without adequate evaluations. Both the damaged bolts and the pipe supports would have impeded the blow-out panels from performing the design function during certain accidents.

The second apparent violation involves making changes to the facility without an adequate evaluation to determine if an unreviewed safety question existed. In one example, the existence of damaged bolts and attached pipe supports allowed the blow-out panels to degrade into non-compliance with the design requirements described in the Updated Final Safety Analysis Report (UFSAR). In the other example, a 10 CFR 50.59 safety evaluation performed by your staff improperly concluded that the reactor building siding inner panel was the only siding component required for secondary containment, and that panel's exterior siding was not an integral part of secondary containment.

In accordance with the Enforcement Policy, no Notice of Violation is presently being issued for these inspection findings. In addition, please be advised that the number and characterization of the apparent violation described in the enclosed inspection report may change as a result of further NRC review.

An open pre-decisional enforcement conference to discuss these apparent violations has been scheduled for February 19, 1997, at 9:30 a.m. (CDT) in the Region III Office in Lisle, Illinois. The decision to hold a pre-decisional enforcement conference does

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not mean that the NRC has determined that a violation has occurred or that enforcement action will be taken. This conference is being held to obtain information to enable the NRC to make an enforcement decision. This information includes a common understanding of the facts, root causes, missed opportunities to identify the apparent violation sooner, corrective actions, significance of the issues and the need for lasting and effective corrective action.

In particular, during the enforcement conference we expect you to address:

(1) how changes were made to the facility without determining if an unreviewed safety question existed, (2) what your plans are to increase the technical quality of safety evaluations, (3) the reasons for the missed opportunities to determine if the non-safety classification of the reactor building blow-out panels was consistent with the design basis, and (4) your future plans and the corrective actions for maintaining the reactor building blow-panels in accordance with design requirements. In addition, this is an opportunity for you to point out any errors in our inspection report and for you to provide any additional information concerning your perspectives on: (1) the severity of the violations, (2) the application of the factors that the NRC considers when it determines the amount of a civil penalty that may be assessed in accordance with Section VI.B.2 of the Enforcement Policy, and (3) any other application of the Enforcement Policy to this case, including the exercise of discretion in accordance with Section VII.

You will be advised by separate correspondence of the results of our deliberations on this matter. No response regarding the apparent violations is required at this time.

In accordance with 10 CFR 2.790 of the NRC's "Rules of Practice," a copy of this letter and its enclosures will be placed in the NRC Public Document Room (PDR).

Sincerely,

/s/ J. A. Grobe for

James L. Caldwell, Director
Division of Reactor Projects

Docket Nos.: 50-254, 50-265
License Nos.: DPR-29, DPR-30

Enclosures:

Inspection Reports 50-254/96019(DRP), 50-265/96019(DRP)

See Attached Distribution

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