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February 6, 1997

Mr. E. Watzl
Vice President, Nuclear Generation
Northern States Power Company
414 Nicollet Mall
Minneapolis, MN 55401

Dear Mr. Watzl:

In a telephone conversation on February 6, 1997, between Mr. D. Westphal and Mr. J. Lennartz, arrangements were made for the administration of licensing examinations at the Prairie Island Nuclear Station the week of June 16, 1997.

Your staff has agreed to participate in a voluntary pilot examination program in which your staff will prepare the written examinations and operating tests and submit them to the NRC regional office for evaluation and approval. Your staff will prepare the proposed examinations in accordance with the guidelines in Revision 7, Supplement 1, of NUREG-1021, "Operator Licensing Examiner Standards," Revision 5 of NUREG/BR-0122, "Examiners' Handbook for Developing Operator Licensing Written Examinations," and the enclosure to this letter. The NRC regional office will discuss with your staff any examination changes that might be necessary prior to their administration.

To meet the above schedule, it will be necessary for your staff to furnish the proposed examination outlines by April 14, 1997. The proposed written examinations and operating tests will be due by May 12, 1997. Reference materials will be requested as needed, or will be reviewed during an examination preparation visit the week of June 2, 1997. Any delay in receiving the required reference and examination materials or the submittal of inadequate or incomplete materials may result in the examinations being rescheduled.

In order to conduct the requested written examinations and operating tests, it will be necessary for your staff to provide adequate space and accommodations in accordance with ES-402 and to make the simulation facility available on the dates noted above.

ES-402, Attachment 1, and ES-302, Attachment 1, contain a number of NRC policies and guidelines that will be in effect while the written examinations and operating tests are being administered. In accordance with ES-302, your staff should retain the original simulator performance data (e.g., system pressures, temperatures, and levels) generated during the dynamic operating tests until the examination results are final.

Your staff should submit preliminary reactor operator and senior reactor operator license applications and waiver requests at least 30 days before the first examination date so that the NRC will be able to review the applications and the medical certifications and evaluate any requested waivers. If the applications are not received at least 30 days before the examination date, a postponement may be necessary. Signed applications certifying that all training has been completed should be submitted at least 14 days before the first examination date.

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This request is covered by Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Clearance Number 3150-0101, which expires April 30, 1997. The estimated average burden is 7.7 hours per response, including gathering, copying and mailing the required material. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the Information and Records Management Branch, Mail Stop T-6 F33, Office of Information Resources Management, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, D.C. 20555; and to the Paperwork Reduction Project (3150-0101), Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, NEOB-10202, Office of Management and Budget, Washington, D.C. 20503.

Thank you for your cooperation in this matter. Mr. D. Westphal has been advised of the policies and guidelines referenced in this letter. If you have any questions regarding the NRC's examination procedures and guidelines, please contact Jay Lennartz at 630-829-9721.

Sincerely,

Original Signed by Jay A. Lennartz

Jay A. Lennartz, Acting Chief
Operator Licensing Branch

Docket Nos. 50-282; 50-306

Enclosure: Pilot Examination Guidelines

cc w/encl: Plant Manager, Prairie Island
John W. Ferman, Ph.D.
Nuclear Engineer, MPCA
State Liaison Officer, State
of Minnesota
State Liaison Officer, State
of Wisconsin
Tribal Council, Prairie Island
Dakota Community
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DATE	02/06/97

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PILOT EXAMINATION GUIDELINES

Facility licensees will prepare the written examinations and operating tests (dynamic simulator and walkthrough) in accordance with the instructions in Revision 7, Supplement 1, of NUREG-1021 ("Operator Licensing Examiner Standards") and Revision 5 of NUREG/BR-0122 ("Examiners' Handbook for Developing Operator Licensing Written Examinations"), subject to the following additional criteria:

- (1) The facility licensee will prepare an integrated examination outline (written and operating test) and submit it to the NRC regional office for review, comment, and approval at least 60 days before the scheduled examination date. The NRC chief examiner will work with the facility licensee to resolve any problems and to avoid unnecessary revision of the final examination products.
- (2) Facility employees who are involved with developing the examinations and tests will sign a standard security agreement (Form ES-201-2) before they gain specific knowledge of the examinations and tests. Facility employees who played a substantial role in training the license applicants will generally not be involved in developing the license examinations or tests. If the facility licensee considers such employees necessary for developing the examinations or tests, it will define the process it will take to ensure that the integrity of the examinations is not compromised and discuss the process with the NRC chief examiner.
- (3) The written examinations and operating tests will satisfy the following specific criteria:
 - A maximum of 50 percent of the written examination questions may be taken directly from the facility question bank; up to an additional 40 percent of the questions may be taken from the facility bank but must be significantly modified; and a minimum of 10 percent of the questions will be newly developed. As discussed in NUREG/BR-0122, new questions should emphasize the applicants' understanding at the comprehension or application levels of knowledge because they have the greatest operational and discriminatory validity.
 - No more than 25 percent of the questions on the examination may be repeated from examinations, quizzes, or tests administered to the license applicants during their license training class, or from the past two NRC license examinations at the facility. No questions may be drawn directly from the applicants' audit examination or similar testing vehicle given at the end of the license training class.
 - Each walkthrough test will include at least two job performance measures (JPMs) that are either new or significantly altered, and each simulator scenario set will include at least one new or significantly altered scenario. Other scenarios used may be drawn directly from the facility scenario bank; however, they will be altered to the degree needed to prevent the applicants from immediately recognizing the scenarios based on initial conditions or other cues.

- A significant modification, for purposes of the written questions, means a change to the conditions in the stem and at least one distractor significantly changed. Similarly, JPMs and simulator scenarios will have at least one substantive event or condition change that alters the course of action in the JPM or scenario.
- (4) The facility licensee will submit the final written examinations and operating tests to the NRC regional office at least 30 days before the scheduled examination date. In its submittal, the facility licensee will include a history (e.g., bank, revised, new, and date last used) of each test item used on the written and operating tests.
 - (5) The NRC regional office will assign a chief examiner to coordinate the review, revision (as determined necessary by the NRC), and validation of the written examinations and operating tests with the facility licensee. Additional NRC staff examiners will be assigned as necessary (typically one or two, depending on the number of applicants) to assist the chief examiner with administering and grading the operating tests in accordance with existing procedures. The facility licensee will administer and grade the written examinations; NRC examiners will review and approve the licensee's grading.