



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

REGION IV

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ARLINGTON, TEXAS 76011-8064

FEB 14 1997

G. R. Horn, Senior Vice President
of Energy Supply
Nebraska Public Power District
1414 15th Street
Columbus, Nebraska 68601

SUBJECT: SYSTEMATIC ASSESSMENT OF LICENSEE PERFORMANCE (SALP)
REPORT 50-298/97-99

Enclosed for your review is the SALP report for the Cooper Nuclear Station (CNS) for the period of July 9, 1995, through January 11, 1997. A meeting to discuss this report with you and your staff has been scheduled for 9 a.m. on March 5, 1997, at your CNS facility near Brownville, Nebraska.

During this meeting, you are encouraged and expected to candidly comment on our report. Although this meeting is a forum between the Nebraska Public Power District and the NRC, it will be open to observation by members of the public and other interested parties.

In accordance with NRC policy, I have reviewed the recommendations of the SALP Board and concur with the ratings and the views. Overall, safety performance at the Cooper Nuclear Station was improved somewhat from the last assessment period but remained a concern. The functional areas of operations, maintenance, and plant support were rated as Category 2, which indicated that your staff demonstrated a good level of performance. The functional area of engineering was rated as Category 3 for the second consecutive SALP period, which indicated that performance in this area was acceptable but needing improvement.

In the operations area, you demonstrated a conservative operating philosophy. Good operator performance was noted during routine evolutions, but procedure adherence declined during stressful situations and recurring command, control, and supervisory oversight deficiencies were apparent. The better rating in the maintenance area was principally attributed to the improved surveillance testing program, improvements in problem identification, and achieving an overall good material condition at the facility. However, the work control organization continued to unnecessarily challenge operations with work packages that were not compatible with plant conditions and numerous deficiencies were identified with your implementation of the maintenance rule.

Continued weaknesses were noted in the engineering area. These were indicative of your ineffectiveness in resolving problems, particularly, with system engineering activities. Your self-assessment of engineering performance was an excellent effort that identified your limited progress in correcting long-standing problems. In the area of plant support, performance in physical security was excellent and improvement was noted in the radiological controls area, particularly in the implementation of your program to maintain

radiation exposures as low as is reasonably achievable. Overall, performance in emergency preparedness was satisfactory, but opportunities for improvement were noted during the biennial exercise.

Procedure adherence problems were identified in most functional areas, and the NRC noted that performance standards were not effectively communicated to your staff. You need to take steps to continue to improve procedure adherence and clearly articulate performance standards and expectations in all disciplines.

The NRC recognizes your efforts to improve performance at all levels, as evidenced by increased self-identification of problems. CNS has demonstrated its ability to perform probing and effective self-assessments as evidenced by the engineering effort and its followup. Similarly, routine activities of the quality assurance organization have proven it to be aggressive and constructive. However, you have yet to fully demonstrate the ability to develop and implement lasting corrective actions for identified deficiencies in some areas, most notably in the engineering area.

Because engineering received a Category 3 rating, you are requested to discuss, at the March 5, 1997, SALP public meeting, your view of performance and those actions that you have planned to achieve performance improvement in this functional area. We further request that you provide to us, in writing, within 30 days of the meeting, a written response addressing your performance improvement plans. While no written response is necessary, we welcome any comments you may have for the remaining SALP functional areas.

In accordance with Section 2.790 of the NRC's "Rules of Practice," Part 2, Title 10, Code of Federal Regulations, a copy of this letter and the SALP report will be placed in the NRC's Public Document Room.

Should you have any questions about the SALP report, I would be pleased to discuss them with you.

Sincerely,



L. J. Callan
Regional Administrator

Docket: 50-298
License: DPR-46

Enclosure:
SALP Report 50-298/97-99

cc w/enclosure:

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E-Mail report to D. Nelson (DJN)
 E-Mail report to NRR Event Tracking System (IPAS)
 E-Mail report to Richard Correia (RPC)
 E-Mail report to Ronald Frahm, Jr. (PKF)

bcc to DMB (IE40)

bcc distrib. by RIV:

L. J. Callan
 DRP Director
 Branch Chief (DRP/C)
 Branch Chief (DRP/TSS)
 Project Engineer (DRP/C)
 Leah Tremper (OC/LFDCB, MS: TWFN 9E10)
 The Chairman (MS: 16-G-15)
 Commissioner Rogers (MS: 16-G-15)
 Commissioner Dicus
 Commissioner Diaz
 Commissioner McGaffigan
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 F. Miraglia, Acting Director, NRR
 J. Lieberman, OE
 Associate Dir. for Projects, NRR
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 SALP Program Manager, NRR/ILPB (2 copies)
 W. D. Beckner, NRR Project Director (MS: 13-H-3)
 J. R. Hall, NRR Project Manager (MS: 13-H-3)

Resident Inspector
 DRS-PSB
 MIS System
 RIV File
 Carol Gordon
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RA									
LJCallan									
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*previously concurred

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