

February 25, 1997

CAL No. RIII-97-002

Mr. J. H. Mueller  
Site Vice President  
Zion Station  
Commonwealth Edison Company  
101 Shiloh Boulevard  
Zion, IL 60099

SUBJECT: CONFIRMATORY ACTION LETTER

Dear Mr. Mueller:

On February 21, 1997, an event occurred at the Zion Station involving inadequate control of reactivity changes during a reactor shutdown. Specifically, plant management directed that a shutdown of Unit 1 be initiated in a safe and orderly manner. However, operations supervision directed the licensed reactor operator to reduce Unit 1 reactor power and maintain the reactor at the point of adding heat. The licensed reactor operator inserted control rods to bring the Unit 1 reactor to a substantially subcritical condition, contrary to the direction of operations supervision. Subsequently, the operator withdrew control rods without effectively communicating with operations supervision regarding the unintended plant status. In addition, the seriousness of these errors was not fully recognized by plant personnel until the following day.

We are concerned with performance deficiencies that may have occurred during this event involving supervisory oversight, crew communications, procedure quality and adherence, plant staff safety focus, control room decorum, and operator understanding of your expectations regarding reactivity control. Therefore, on February 24, 1997, an Augmented Inspection Team (AIT) was formed and sent to the Zion Station to investigate the event and your actions. The objectives of the AIT are to identify and communicate both the facts of the event and any potential generic safety concerns, and to document the findings and conclusions of the onsite inspection.

Pursuant to a telephone conversation between you and Mr. Jack Grobe on February 25, 1997, it is our understanding that you have taken or will take the following actions:

- (1) You will place Unit 1 in cold shutdown and have temporarily removed the involved licensed operations shift personnel from licensed duties. Further, you are maintaining Unit 2 in cold shutdown.

9703030174 970225  
PDR ADOCK 05000295  
P PDR

JE 36  
10

- (2) You have established an event response team to perform a comprehensive event assessment including root cause evaluation and determination of potential safety consequences.
- (3) You will evaluate the results of the comprehensive event assessment with regard to possible generic performance deficiencies and develop a remediation plan. The actions specified in the plan will include specific steps required to ensure adequate personnel performance, including upgraded training for licensed operators, and if necessary, the training staff. These steps will be implemented prior to startup of either unit. Longer term actions will be documented in the plan with projected implementation dates.
- (4) You will document your actions and findings related to items (1), (2), and (3) above and preserve any evidence collected for examination by the NRC.
- (5) Prior to the startup of either unit, you will discuss the results of your investigation of this event, any associated generic concerns, and corrective actions regarding personnel performance with the NRC and submit your investigation report and remediation plan to the NRC.

Nothing in this confirmatory action letter is intended to preclude you from taking actions which you deem necessary to place the plant in a safe condition or maintain it in a safe condition in the event of changing conditions. The AIT will be closely evaluating your actions in response to this event and will discuss its findings with you during a public meeting at the conclusion of the inspection.

Pursuant to Section 182 of the Atomic Energy Act, 42 U.S.C. 2232, you are required to:

- 1) Notify me immediately if your understanding differs from that set forth above;
- 2) Promptly notify me if for any reason you cannot complete the actions discussed in items (1) through (5) above.

Issuance of this Confirmatory Action Letter does not preclude issuance of an order formalizing the above commitments or requiring other actions on the part of the licensee; nor does it preclude the NRC from taking enforcement action for violations of NRC requirements that may have prompted the issuance of this letter. In addition, failure to take the actions addressed in this Confirmatory Action Letter may result in enforcement action.

In accordance with 10 CFR 2.790 of the NRC's "Rules of Practice," a copy of this letter and your response will be placed in the NRC Public Document Room (PDR). To the extent possible, your response should not include any personal privacy, proprietary, or safeguards information so that it can be placed in the PDR without redaction. However, if you find it

necessary to include such information, you should clearly indicate the specific information that you desire not to be placed in the PDR, and provide the legal basis to support your request for withholding the information from the public.

Sincerely,

/s/ J. A. Grobe for

A. Bill Beach  
Regional Administrator

Docket Nos. 50-295; 50-304

cc: T. J. Maiman, Senior Vice President  
Nuclear Operations Division  
D. A. Sager, Vice President,  
Generation Support  
H. W. Keiser, Chief Nuclear  
Operating Officer  
G. K. Schwartz, Station Manager  
W. Stone, Regulatory Assurance  
Supervisor  
I. Johnson, Acting Nuclear  
Regulatory Services Manager  
Richard Hubbard  
Nathan Schloss, Economist  
Office of the Attorney General  
Mayor, City of Zion  
State Liaison Officer, Wisconsin  
State Liaison Officer  
Chairman, Illinois Commerce  
Commission  
Document Control Desk-Licensing

Distribution:

Docket File	Project Manager, NRR	TSS
PUBLIC <del>FILE</del>	DRP	J. Callan, EDO
OC/LFDCB	RIII PRR	H. Thompson, EDO
SRI Byron, Braidwood,	CAA1 (E-mail)	J. Lieberman, OE
Zion	W. L. Axelson	J. Goldberg, OGC
A. B. Beach	RAC1 (E-Mail)	C. Paperiello, NMSS
RIII Enf. Coordinator	DRS (3)	G. Grant

DOCUMENT NAME: A:\ZION0297.CAL

To receive a copy of this document, indicate in the box "C" = Copy without attach/encl "E" = Copy with attach/encl "N" = No copy

OFFICE	RIII	E	NRR/AEOD	E	RIII	E	RIII	E
NAME	Depas/co	DEW for	Capra	Per te con	Grobe		Beach	
DATE	2/25/97		2/25/97		2/25/97		2/25/97	

OFFICIAL RECORD COPY

