

May 29, 1997

EA 97-256

Mr. James W. Langenbach
Vice President and Director, TMI
GPU Nuclear Corporation
Three Mile Island Nuclear Station
Post Office Box 480
Middletown, PA 17057-0191

SUBJECT: NRC INSPECTION REPORT NO. 50-289/97-03

Dear Mr. Langenbach:

On April 27, 1997, the NRC completed an inspection at your Three Mile Island 1 reactor facility. The enclosed report presents the results of that inspection.

We noted continued excellent response from operators, supervision, and management for several operational challenges that occurred during the inspection period. In addition, the support to the operational organization from radiological control, engineering, and maintenance personnel for these events was excellent and timely. In particular, the operations response and evaluation of the reactor coolant drain tank in-leakage was thorough and resulted in determining the source location in a short period of time.

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. First, your staff identified that during the period of about March 17, 1986 until March 23, 1997, there was not reasonable assurance that the reactor building emergency cooling fans, AH-E-1A, 1B, & 1C would have functioned under post-LOCA environment conditions because their motors were not environmentally qualified. There was a small length of exposed metal between the heat shrink tubing and the spark plug porcelain connector to the motor. In addition, the inspectors concluded that your process for and the timeliness of addressing corrective actions for the condition of AH-E-1B & 1C upon identifying the condition of AH-E-1A was weak. ICD
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The circumstances surrounding these apparent violations, the significance of the issues, and the need for lasting and effective corrective action were discussed with members of your staff at the inspection exit meeting on May 1, 1997, and later at an enforcement conference involving other issues on May 22, 1997. In a telephone conversation between you and Mr. Peter W. Eselgroth of my staff on May 28, 1997, Mr. Eselgroth stated that it is not necessary to conduct a predecisional enforcement conference in order to enable the NRC to make an enforcement decision and you stated that you also did not consider such a conference to be necessary.

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

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,

Original Signed By:

Charles W. Hehl, Director
Division of Reactor Projects

Docket No.: 50-289
License No.: DPR-50

Enclosure: NRC Inspection Report No. 50-289/97-03

cc w/enci:

E. L. Blake, Shaw, Pittman, Potts and Trowbridge (Legal Counsel for GPUN)
J. C. Fornicola, Director, Licensing and Regulatory Affairs
B. A. Mehler, PDMS Manager
TMI-Alert (TMIA)
J. S. Wetmore, Manager, TMI Regulatory Affairs
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

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