

April 30, 1997

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

SUBJECT: NRC SPECIAL INSPECTION REPORT NO. 50-306/97006 AND
NOTICE OF VIOLATION

Dear Mr. Wadley:

On March 17, 1997, the NRC completed a special inspection at your Prairie Island Nuclear Generating Plant. The enclosed report presents the results of that inspection.

The purpose of this inspection was to review the circumstances of a Unit 2 shutdown operations event on the night of March 6-7, 1997, involving a planned drain of coolant from the reactor coolant system. Due to a non-licensed operator's valve tagging error, the drain was conducted without the system vented. Without an adequate vent path, the instrumentation that control room operators used to monitor the drain was not representative of the amount of inventory drained from the system. Consequently, more coolant than intended was drained from the system and a gas void developed in the high points of the reactor coolant system.

Although there was no adverse impact on decay heat removal capability, this event represents a loss of control of a plant evolution. We identified weaknesses in the procedures used for the evolution, your evaluation of the impact of a change in plant configuration to establish a vent path, plant configuration control, and interpretation of available data by control room operators during the evolution.

Based on the results of this inspection, the NRC has determined that two violations of NRC requirements occurred. The violations are cited in the enclosed Notice of Violation (Notice) and the circumstances surrounding them are described in detail in the subject inspection report.

You are required to respond to this letter and should follow the instructions specified in the enclosed Notice when preparing your response. The NRC will use your response, in part, to determine whether further enforcement action is necessary to ensure compliance with regulatory requirements.

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M. Wadley

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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. L. Caldwell

J. L. Caldwell, Director
Division of Reactor Projects

Docket No.: 50-306

License No.: DPR-60

Enclosures: Notice of Violation
Inspection Report 50-306/97006

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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