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April 29, 1997

U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, DC 20555

ATTN: Document Control Desk

Dear Sir:

We are writing to notify you of a potential safety-related problem with ASCO HV 266000-007J Scram Solenoid Pilot Valves (SSPV's) possibly supplied to several BWR Nuclear Plants through our customer, General Electric Company.

During performance maintenance testing of SSPV's at GPU Nuclear's Oyster Creek Nuclear Plant, some thirteen out of thirty-six SSPV's installed in the plant exhibited excessive air leakage. An investigation by the utility, General Electric, and ASCO concluded that the leakage was the result of hardening of the core disc in the SSPV pilot head.

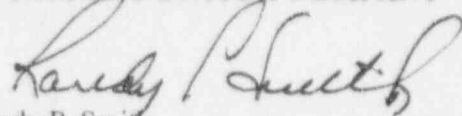
Subsequent investigation by ASCO indicates that some SSPV's installed in the Oyster Creek Plant may have been shipped with core discs fabricated from commercial grade Buna-N (Nitrile) material rather than the required nuclear grade Fluorocarbon material.

We are continuing our investigation in cooperation with the utility and General Electric to determine the root cause of this problem and population of suspect SSPV's. At the present time, the evidence suggests that the substitution of the Buna-N material occurred in a portion of the first lot of SSPV's manufactured after a 1994 design change that changed the core discs to the Fluorocarbon material.

We will keep you informed of the progress of our investigation. Please feel free to contact me at 201-966-2100 for additional information.

Sincerely,

AUTOMATIC SWITCH COMPANY



Randy P. Smith
President

RPS/ja

CC: General Electric
GPU Nuclear - Oyster Creek

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