



UNITED STATES  
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

REGION IV  
611 RYAN PLAZA DRIVE, SUITE 400  
ARLINGTON, TEXAS 76011 8064

May 8, 1997

Otto L. Maynard, President and  
Chief Executive Officer  
Wolf Creek Nuclear Operating Corporation  
P.O. Box 411  
Burlington, Kansas 66839

SUBJECT: SYSTEMATIC ASSESSMENT OF LICENSEE PERFORMANCE (SALP)  
REPORT 50-482/97-99

Dear Mr. Maynard:

Enclosed for your review is the SALP report for the Wolf Creek Generating Station, for the period of October 8, 1995, through April 5, 1997. A public meeting to discuss this report with you and your staff has been scheduled at the Dwight D. Eisenhower Learning Center on May 22, 1997, at 9 a.m. (CDT). During this meeting, you are encouraged and expected to candidly comment on our report. Although this meeting is a forum between Wolf Creek Nuclear Operating Corporation and the NRC, it will be open to observation by members of the public and other interested parties.

In accordance with NRC's policy, I have reviewed the recommendations of the SALP Board and concur with their ratings and views. The functional areas of Operations, Maintenance, and Plant Support were rated as Category 2, reflecting overall good safety performance. The functional area of Engineering was rated as Category 3, reflecting acceptable safety performance. Overall, this represents a significant decline in performance at Wolf Creek. Specifically, the ratings in the Operations, Engineering, and Plant Support areas have declined from those of the previous SALP report.

In the Operations area, performance during routine and normal operations continued to be characterized by a generally good safety focus; however, there were numerous instances of minor procedural violations and inattention to detail. Performance during nonroutine operations was not as well focused. This was most evident during the frazil ice event, in which operator actions complicated the plant response.

In the Engineering area, performance declined but was acceptable. Specifically, we noted design related deficiencies and inconsistent support of the operations and maintenance functions. The quality of 10 CFR 50.59 evaluations and engineering assessments associated with operability were inconsistent and contributed to occasions in which the plant was not operated in accordance with the Technical Specifications. Finally, there were examples where corrective actions developed in response to identified problems were not thorough and, therefore, did not completely resolve the associated issues.

In the Plant Support area, the security and housekeeping functions continued to demonstrate a high level of performance. A slight decline was noted, however, in the radiological controls function. This was primarily attributable to the multiple errors



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committed by radiological protection technicians and radiation workers. In the emergency preparedness area, performance problems in determining and communicating emergency action information were noted.

In the Maintenance area, performance remained good. Overall plant material condition was an area of strength; however, the maintenance of the auxiliary feedwater system challenged the staff throughout the assessment period. Craft skills were very good, but there were several instances of individuals failing to comply with procedures. Planning and scheduling effectiveness was notably improved.

The SALP Board identified one area of weakness whose implications were endemic in all of the functional areas. Throughout the assessment period, there were problems with developing and implementing in-depth and effective corrective actions to identified problems. Many of the problems identified in the previous SALP report continued to hamper operations at the site. In addition, deficiencies identified by external and internal self-assessment activities during this assessment period were not effectively resolved in all instances.

Because the performance rating in engineering was a Category 3, you are requested to discuss at the May 22, 1997, SALP public meeting your view of performance and the actions which you have planned to achieve performance improvement in this functional area. We further request that, within 30 days of the public meeting, you provide us a written response highlighting your performance improvement plans. While no written response is required for the other functional areas, we would welcome any comments which you choose to submit.

In accordance with Section 2.790 of the NRC's "Rules of Practice," a copy of this letter and the SALP report will be placed in the NRC Public Document Room. Should you have any questions or comments, I would be pleased to discuss them with you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Ellis W. Merschoff', written in a cursive style.

Ellis W. Merschoff  
Regional Administrator

Docket No.: 50-482  
License No.: NPF-42

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Operating Corporation

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Enclosure:  
SALP Report 50-482/97-99

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Mr. Frank Moussa  
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Topeka, Kansas 66611-1287

MAY - 8 1997

E-Mail report to T. Boyce (THB)  
E-Mail report to NRR Event Tracking System (IPAS)  
E-Mail report to Document Control Desk (DOCDESK)  
E-Mail report to Richard Correia (RPC)  
E-Mail report to Frank Talbot (FXT)

bcc to DMB (IE40)

bcc distrib. by RIV:

Regional Administrator

DRP Director

Branch Chief (DRP/B)

Project Engineer (DRP/B)

Branch Chief (DRP/TSS)

The Chairman (MS: 16-G-15)

Commissioner Rogers (MS: 16-G-15)

Commissioner Dicus

Commissioner Diaz

Commissioner McGaffigan

L. J. Callan, EDO (MS: 17-G-21)

Associate Dir. for Projects, NRR

Associate Dir. for Insp., and Tech. Assmt, NRR

SALP Program Manager, NRR/ILPB (2 copies)

W. H. Bateman, NRR Project Director (MS: 13E17)

J. Stone, NRR Project Manager (MS: 13E16)

Resident Inspector

SRI (Callaway, RIV)

DRS-PSB

MIS System

RIV File

Records Center, INPO

Deputy Regional Administrator

B. Henderson, PAO

DRP

SRIs at all RIV sites

B. Murray, DRS/PSB

C. A. Hackney

Carol Gordon

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