



**UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
REGION IV
611 RYAN PLAZA DRIVE, SUITE 400
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May 18, 2000

J. H. Swailes, Vice President of
Nuclear Energy
Nebraska Public Power District
P.O. Box 98
Brownville, Nebraska 68321

SUBJECT: ANNUAL ASSESSMENT LETTER - COOPER NUCLEAR STATION

Dear Mr. Swailes:

On May 3, 2000, the NRC staff completed its end-of-cycle plant performance assessment of Cooper Nuclear Station. The end-of-cycle review for Cooper Nuclear Station involved the participation of all technical divisions in evaluating performance indicators (PIs) and inspection results for the period May 30, 1999, to April 1, 2000. The purpose of this letter is to inform you of our assessment of your safety performance during this period and to advise you of our planned inspection effort resulting from this end-of-cycle review.

Overall, Cooper Nuclear Station operated in a manner that preserved public health and safety. Cooper Nuclear Station fully met all cornerstone objectives. While the plant performance during the assessment period was within the licensee response column, you identified a concern with the qualification of electrical splices in containment shortly after the end of the assessment period. On April 19, 2000, we began an inspection to review the design and configuration of environmentally qualified splice treatments at Cooper Nuclear Station. The issues related to the splice treatments were not used during our end-of-cycle assessment because the safety significance of this issue had not been determined at the time. We will inform you of the results of that inspection by separate correspondence.

Based on the End-of-Cycle Review results, all performance indicators for the cornerstones were in the licensee response column. Additionally, NRC inspections and licensee self-assessments did not identify any findings that were other than green (very low safety significance) within the cornerstones of safety. Therefore, at this time, we plan to conduct only baseline inspections at your facility over the next 12 months.

The enclosed inspection plan details the scheduled inspections during the period from April 2, 2000, to March 31, 2001. The inspection plan is provided to minimize the resource impact on your staff and to allow for scheduling conflicts and personnel availability to be resolved in advance of inspector arrival onsite. Routine resident inspections are not listed due to their ongoing and continuous nature. The last 6 months of the inspection plan is tentative and will be revised at the midcycle review meeting.

In accordance with 10 CFR 2.790 of the NRC's "Rules of Practice," a copy of this letter and its enclosure will be placed in the NRC Public Electronic Reading Room (PERR) link at the NRC

homepage, <http://www.nrc.gov/NRC/ADAMS/index.html>. More detailed information that provides the basis for this assessment is available at the following NRC website: <http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/index.html>

If circumstances arise which cause us to change this inspection plan, we will contact you to discuss the change as soon as possible. Please contact me at 817-860-8185 with any questions you may have regarding this letter or the inspection plan.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Charles S. Marschall, Chief
Project Branch C
Division of Reactor Projects

Docket No. 50-298
Licensee No. DPR-46

Enclosure:
Cooper Nuclear Station Inspection/Activity Plan

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