

May 18, 2000

Mr. Michael J. Colomb
Site Executive Officer
New York Power Authority
James A. FitzPatrick Nuclear Power Plant
Post Office Box 41
Lycoming, NY 13093

**SUBJECT: ANNUAL ASSESSMENT LETTER - JAMES A. FITZPATRICK NUCLEAR
POWER PLANT (Report 05000333/2000-010)**

Dear Mr. Colomb:

On May 1, 2000, the NRC staff completed its end-of-year plant performance assessment of the James A. FitzPatrick Nuclear Power Plant, in which numerous NRC organizations evaluated the performance indicators (PIs) and inspection results for the period May 30, 1999 - April 1, 2000. The purpose of this letter is to inform you of our assessment of your safety performance during this period.

Overall, the James A. FitzPatrick Nuclear Power Plant was operated in a manner that preserved public health and safety. Plant performance for the most recent quarter was within the Regulatory Response Column of the NRC's Action Matrix, based on one inspection finding of low to moderate safety significance (White) within the Mitigating Systems Cornerstone and all PIs indicating performance at a level requiring no additional NRC oversight (Green). FitzPatrick met all cornerstone objectives.

The White finding within the Mitigating Systems Cornerstone involved an overspeed trip of the high pressure coolant injection (HPCI) system following a plant scram on October 14, 1999. Our inspection concluded that this HPCI performance resulted from poor system performance monitoring and ineffective corrective actions to a prior industry-wide HPCI performance issue. In April 2000 we performed a supplemental inspection of your evaluations into this issue, and determined your review and ongoing corrective actions to be acceptable. As such, we plan no additional inspections on this finding, and the baseline inspection program will be performed at your facility over the next 12 month cycle.

During the assessment period there were some PIs which were other than Green, but the PIs are currently Green and no additional inspection is planned. Specifically, two Green PIs from previous quarters, i.e., Scrams with Loss of Normal Heat Removal (2nd quarter 1999) and Unplanned Power Changes per 7,000 Critical Hours (4th quarter 1999), have been retroactively categorized as White based on recent changes in the PI thresholds. Also, in a similar but reverse manner, the White PI for Safety System Unavailability, HPCI System (4Q 1999) has been retroactively categorized as Green due to a recent revision in PI guidance. Because these PIs are presently Green, no additional inspection beyond the baseline inspection program is planned.

In addition, we continue to note an adverse trend in your engineering and station technical support activities. Our mid-cycle performance review letter dated January 3, 2000, noted weaknesses in engineering support, and our findings continue to support this assessment. In addition to the White finding associated with HPCI described above, there were several Green findings that reflected poor problem identification, weak operability evaluations, deficient system performance monitoring, ineffective corrective actions and acceptance of degraded material conditions.

We plan to present this assessment to you and your staff in a meeting at the FitzPatrick site on June 6 with public observation. We are aware of your ongoing efforts to reorganize engineering. At the meeting we would appreciate hearing your progress on these efforts and your plans to monitor the effectiveness of the engineering and system engineering functions.

This letter advises you of our planned inspection effort resulting from the FitzPatrick end-of-cycle review. The enclosed inspection plan details the scheduled inspections for 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 six months of the inspection plan are tentative and may be revised in early December following the mid-cycle 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 Document Room (PDR). 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 Glenn Meyer at 610-337-5211 with any questions you may have regarding this letter or the inspection plan.

Sincerely,

**/RA by
James C. Linville Acting For/**

A. Randolph Blough, Director
Division of Reactor Projects

Docket No. 05000333
License No. DPR-59

Enclosure: James A. FitzPatrick Nuclear Power Plant Inspection/Activity Plan

cc w/encl:

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