

March 31, 2000

Mr. Oliver D. Kingsley  
President, Nuclear Generation Group  
Commonwealth Edison Company  
ATTN: Regulatory Services  
Executive Towers West III  
1400 Opus Place, Suite 500  
Downers Grove, IL 60515

SUBJECT: PLANT PERFORMANCE REVIEW - LASALLE COUNTY STATION

Dear Mr. Kingsley:

The purpose of this letter is to communicate our assessment of your performance and to inform you of our planned inspections at your facility. On March 6, 2000, we completed a Plant Performance Review (PPR) of LaSalle County Station. We conduct these reviews to develop an integrated overview of the safety performance of each operating nuclear power plant. We use the results of the PPR in planning and allocating inspection resources and as inputs to our senior management meeting (SMM) process. This PPR evaluated inspection results and safety performance information for the period from February 1, 1999, through January 31, 2000, but emphasized the last 6 months to ensure that our assessment reflected your current performance. Our most recent summary of plant performance at LaSalle County Station was provided to you in a letter dated March 26, 1999, and was discussed with you in a public meeting on April 6, 1999.

The NRC has been developing a revised reactor oversight process that will replace our existing inspection and assessment processes, including the PPR, the SMM, and the Systematic Assessment of Licensee Performance (SALP). We recently completed a pilot program for the revised reactor oversight process at nine participating sites and are making necessary adjustments based on feedback and lessons learned. We plan to begin initial implementation of the revised reactor oversight process industry-wide, including your facility, on April 2, 2000.

This PPR reflects continued process improvements as we make the transition into the revised reactor oversight process. You will notice that the following summary of plant performance is organized differently from our previous performance summaries. Instead of characterizing our assessment results by SALP functional area, we are organizing the results into the strategic performance areas embodied in the revised reactor oversight process. In addition, we have considered the historical performance indicator data that you submitted in January 2000 in conjunction with the inspection results in assessing your performance. The results of this PPR were used to establish the inspection plan in accordance with the new risk-informed inspection program (consisting of baseline and supplemental inspections). Although this letter incorporates some terms and concepts associated with the new oversight process, it does not

reflect the much broader changes in inspection and assessment that will be evident after we have fully implemented our revised reactor oversight process.

During the assessment period, Unit 1 operated at power until September 2, 1999, when an operator error resulted in an automatic reactor scram on low water level. Unit 1 was restarted and synchronized to the grid on September 4, 1999, and operated until October 23, 1999, when the unit was shutdown for a planned refueling outage. The outage ended on November 21, 1999, and Unit 1 operated at full power throughout the remainder of the assessment period.

Unit 2 entered the assessment period in an extended forced outage. Unit 2 started up from that outage on April 11, 1999, and operated at or near full power until August 21, 1999, when an automatic reactor scram on low water level occurred due to a material condition deficiency. The equipment problem was repaired and Unit 2 was restarted and synchronized to the grid on August 24, 1999. Unit 2 operated at power until November 16, 1999, when the unit was manually scrammed in response to level oscillations caused by an electro-hydraulic control system malfunction. The problem was repaired and Unit 2 was restarted and synchronized to the grid on November 19, 1999. Unit 2 operated at power throughout the remainder of the assessment period.

We have not identified any significant performance issues in the Reactor Safety, Radiation Safety, or Safeguards strategic performance areas during this assessment period and note that LaSalle County Station continues to operate in a safe manner. Therefore, we plan to conduct only baseline inspections at your facility as noted in the enclosed inspection plan.

Enclosure 1 contains a historical listing of plant issues, referred to as the Plant Issues Matrix (PIM), that were used during this PPR process to arrive at our integrated view of your performance trends. The PIM for this assessment is grouped by the prior SALP functional areas of operations, maintenance, engineering and plant support, although the future PIM will be organized along the cornerstones of safety as described in the revised reactor oversight process. The enclosed PIM includes items summarized from inspection reports or other docketed correspondence between the NRC and ComEd regarding LaSalle County Station. We did not document all aspects of licensee programs and performance that may be functioning appropriately. Rather, we only documented issues that we believe warrant management attention or represent noteworthy aspects of performance. In addition, the PPR may also have considered some predecisional and draft material that does not appear in the enclosed PIM, including observations from events and inspections that had occurred since our last inspection report was issued, but had not yet received full review and consideration. We will make this material publically available as part of the normal issuance of our inspection reports and other correspondence.

Enclosure 2 lists our planned inspections for the period April 2000 through March 2001 at LaSalle County Station to allow you to resolve scheduling conflicts and personnel availability in advance of our inspector arrival onsite. The inspection schedule for the latter half of the period is more tentative and may be adjusted in the future due to emerging performance issues at LaSalle County Station or other Region III facilities. Routine resident inspections are not listed due to their ongoing and continuous nature.

We will inform you of any changes to the inspection plan. If you have any questions, please contact me at (630) 829-9757.

Sincerely,

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Kenneth R. Riemer, Acting Chief  
Reactor Projects Branch 2  
Division of Reactor Projects

Docket Nos. 50-373, 50-374  
License Nos. NPF-11, NPF-18

- Enclosures: 1. Plant Issues Matrix
- 2. Inspection Plan

See Attached Distribution

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J. Lutz, County Emergency Management  
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The Honorable William E. Steep  
The Honorable Shirley Gielow  
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T. Templeton, LaSalle County Sheriff  
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