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NRC/TMI 83-010
February 7, 1983

Mr. B. K. Kanga
Director, TH1-2
GPU Nuclear Corp.
P. O. Box 480
Middletown, PA 17057

Dear Mr. Kanga:

In response to your letter, 4410-83-L-0024, dated January 28, 1983, the NRC has reviewed your proposal to maintain the doors in one or both reactor building airlocks open while reactor building recovery activities are in progress. We concur that unimpeded transit through the airlocks will expedite the reactor building cleanup and reduce worker exposure without substantially increasing the risk to the environment. In our assessment we concluded that the potential and consequences of an airborne release through the open airlocks are minimal and the overall effect of opening the airlocks is beneficial. Therefore, subject to our review and approval of implementing procedures, we approve the proposed action.

As stated in your letter of January 28, 1983, there is a reduction in worker exposure during transit through personnel airlock #2 when both airlock doors are open. Airlock #2 is currently used during each reactor building entry, and an immediate man-rem savings can be effected by keeping the airlock open when reactor building work is in progress. Airlock #1, the equipment hatch airlock, has not been used routinely for reactor building entries. However, the advantage of using this airlock to expedite future reactor building cleanup operations has been identified. It is anticipated that airlock #1 will be used routinely for reactor building ingress while airlock #2 will normally serve as the egress route.

Environmental safeguards associated with opening the airlocks for short periods of time have been addressed in GPU submittals, LL2-81-0192, dated August 20, 1981, and 4410-82-L-0023, dated September 16, 1982; and in the NRC Modification of Order, dated September 23, 1981, and Recovery Operations Plan Change, dated October 7, 1982. Based on data obtained during periods when airlock doors were opened for short time periods, the NRC concluded that, given appropriate procedural controls, the doors of both airlocks can remain open during work activities inside the reactor building without significantly decreasing the margin of safety to the general public or workers.

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February 7, 1983

GPU procedural controls shall address the requirement for: (1) a continuous reactor building purge to ensure air flow into the reactor building through the airlocks after the doors are opened, (2) radiation monitoring equipment in place at each airlock and (3) personnel continuously stationed at each open airlock to close the doors expeditiously if required. Provisions will be made to minimize dust content in the air entering the reactor building through the open airlocks. GPU procedures shall also specify that: (1) radiological conditions inside the reactor building will be evaluated prior to opening the airlocks, (2) daily reactor building work schedules will be reviewed to determine whether the scheduled activities fall into the scope of the existing airlock safety evaluations, and (3) if scheduled activities have a potential for increasing airborne radioactivity or changing air flow in the reactor building, the reactor building airlocks will be closed while those activities are in progress.

Original signed by
Lake H. Barrett

Lake H. Barrett
Deputy Program Director
TMI Program Office

cc: J. Barton
J. Larson
J. Theising
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