



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
REGION IV
1600 EAST LAMAR BLVD
ARLINGTON, TEXAS 76011-4511

October 24, 2012

Mr. M. E. Reddemann
Chief Executive Officer
Energy Northwest
P.O. Box 968, Mail Drop 1023
Richland, WA 99352-0968

SUBJECT: FOLLOWUP ASSESSMENT LETTER FOR COLUMBIA GENERATING
STATION

Dear Mr. Reddemann:

As a result of our continuous review of plant performance, which was completed on October 24, 2012, the U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) updated its assessment of Columbia Generating Station. The NRC's evaluation consisted of a review of performance indicators and inspection results. This letter informs you of the NRC's assessment and plans for a future inspection at your facility. This letter supplements, but does not supersede, the mid-cycle assessment letter issued on September 4, 2012.

On October 24, 2012, the NRC informed you by letter of the final significance determination of two White findings in the Emergency Preparedness Cornerstone (ML12298A489). The findings involved your staff's failure to maintain a standard emergency action level scheme and a failure to maintain adequate methods for assessing the consequences of a radiological emergency condition. Based on these findings, the NRC determined the performance at Columbia Generating Station to be in the Degraded Cornerstone Column of the Reactor Oversight Process Action Matrix beginning on June 27, 2012, the date the preliminary findings were discussed with your staff at the exit meeting for Inspection Report 05000397/2012502. The NRC plans to conduct a supplemental inspection to review the actions taken to address the performance issues using Inspection Procedure 95002, "Supplemental Inspection for One Degraded Cornerstone or Any Three White Inputs in a Strategic Performance Area." The NRC will plan this inspection activity when you provide written notification of your readiness for the inspection.

At a Regulatory Conference on September 20, 2012, Energy Northwest requested that the NRC consider the overall degradation of safety related to the emergency preparedness findings as representative of Reactor Oversight Program Action Matrix Column II performance rather than Column III performance. Your position was that the issues, taken together, represented a minimal degradation in safety performance which was consistent with the intent of Column II. In support of your position, you stated: (1) the findings shared causal factors and affected a single function within emergency preparedness, (2) your emergency action level scheme has redundant action levels making it unlikely that classifications would have been significantly delayed, and (3) your default protective action scheme adequately assures public health and

safety, and the findings are not indicative of current performance. The NRC evaluated your request and determined that the findings reflect multiple examples of degraded performance in emergency preparedness activities (including instrument calibration, calculations related to response levels, procedure change reviews at several levels, and procedure usage) and that the additional oversight afforded by the NRC's Column III response, including an independent assessment of the extent of condition and potential safety culture contributions, is warranted.

The supplemental inspection will provide assurance that the root and contributing causes of risk-significant performance issues are understood, the extent of condition and the extent of cause of risk-significant performance issues are identified, determine if safety culture components caused or significantly contributed to the risk-significant performance issues, and that corrective actions for risk-significant performance issues are sufficient to address the root and contributing causes and prevent recurrence.

In accordance with 10 CFR 2.390 of the NRC's "Rules of Practice," a copy of this letter will be made available electronically for public inspection in the NRC Public Document Room or from the NRC's document system (ADAMS), accessible from the NRC Web site at <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html>.

Sincerely,

/RA/ K. Kennedy for

Elmo E. Collins
Regional Administrator

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- Project Engineer, DRP/A (Jason.Dykert@nrc.gov)
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- Public Affairs Officer (Lara.Uselding@nrc.gov)
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- Acting Branch Chief, DRS/TSB (Ray.Kellar@nrc.gov)
- RITS Coordinator (Marisa.Herrera@nrc.gov)
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