



Union of Concerned Scientists

Citizens and Scientists for Environmental Solutions

July 13, 2005

Arthur T. Howell III
Director – Division of Reactor Projects
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Region IV
611 Ryan Plaza Drive, Suite 400
Arlington, TX 76011-4005

SUBJECT: FIRE(S) AT COOPER

Dear Mr. Howell:

Things must be going very well at the Cooper Nuclear Station if so many of its senior managers and staff could travel down to NRC Region IV to whine about the non-cited violation on failure to properly report the March 14, 2005, fire. Listening into the public meeting between the NRC and Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD), I did not come away with the impression that Cooper was a well-managed facility. They reminded me more of students lobbying teachers for more partial credit on exams to improve their grades. It is a far wiser application of time and effort to study for the next exam than moan and groan about grading on the last exam. Management at Cooper seems to have lost the proper safety focus.

For example, Mr. Kennedy on the NRC staff in his opening remarks providing the background for this fire event stated that the fire was caused by debris from a failed light falling into a trash bin. Mr. Kennedy added that the light in question had been observed to be flickering for a couple of days prior to March 14th indicative of a pending failure. The people living around Cooper would have been far better served if the whiners in today's meeting had instead spent that time walking through the Cooper plant looking for flickering lights and signs of pending failures. It is more prudent to prevent tomorrow's event than contest yesterday's event.

I applaud NRC Region IV for not having accepted NPPD's lame excuses for this fire event and hope that Region IV is successful in getting NPPD to stop looking in the rear-view mirror so much.

Sincerely,

David Lochbaum
Nuclear Safety Engineer
Union of Concerned Scientists
1707 H Street NW, Suite 600
Washington, DC 20006
(202) 223-6133