

March 10, 2000

Mr. W. Glenn Warren, Chairman
BWR Owners Group
Southern Nuclear
40 Inverness Center Parkway
PO Box 1295
Birmingham, Al 35242

SUBJECT: FINAL SAFETY EVALUATION OF BWR OWNER'S GROUP ALTERNATE
BOILING WATER REACTOR (BWR) FEEDWATER NOZZLE INSPECTION
(TAC NO. MA6787)

Dear Mr. Warren:

By letter dated September 24, 1999, the BWR Owners Group (BWROG) submitted for NRC staff review Topical Report GE-NE-523-A71-0594, Revision 1, "Alternate BWR Feedwater Nozzle Inspection Requirements," dated August 1999. This report proposed an alternative to the recommendations set forth in NUREG-0619, "BWR Feedwater Nozzle and Control Rod Return Drain Line Nozzle Cracking." As an alternative to the inspection program recommended in NUREG-0619, the topical report would: (1) accept the ultrasonic testing (UT) as the basis to eliminate supplemental liquid penetrant testing of the inside radius of the reactor pressure vessel (RPV) nozzles, (2) lengthen the time interval between routine UT of the inside radius of the RPV nozzles, and (3) reduce the inspection area of the inside radius of the RPV nozzles. The alternative implements existing ASME Code requirements for most licensees. Licensees relying on certain interference fit spargers to reduce thermal stresses will still perform more frequent UT inspections than required by Code. In its review of the topical report, the staff has focused on the quality and reliability of the ultrasonic examinations. The staff has determined that the improvements in examination techniques in recent years justify the proposed alternative, recognizing also that the Section XI, Appendix VIII performance demonstration rules will soon take effect. The staff has previously accepted UT as a basis for eliminating surface examinations.

On June 5, 1998, the staff issued a safety evaluation for GE-NE-523-A71-0594, Revision 0. The BWROG revised the original submittal to address recommendations in the staff's safety evaluation. The BWROG letter of September 24, 1999, responded to our recommendations by adopting the forthcoming schedule for implementation of the ASME Code, Section XI, in 10 CFR 50.55a. The staff has completed its review and determined that the proposed inspection program and schedule in GE-NE-523-A71-0594, Revision 1, is justified and provides an acceptable level of quality and safety. Therefore, GE-NE-523-A71-0594, Revision 1, is an acceptable alternative to the inspection guidelines in NUREG-0619.

In accordance with procedures established in NUREG-0390, it is requested that the BWROG issue accepted versions of this report, proprietary and non-proprietary, within three months of receipt of this letter. The accepted versions should incorporate this letter between the title page and the abstract. The accepted versions should include an -A (designated accepted) following the report identification symbol.

Mr. W. Glenn Warren

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March 10, 2000

If you have any questions please call Robert M. Pulsifer at (301) 415-3016.

Sincerely,

/RA by S. Dembek Acting For/

Stuart A. Richards, Director
Project Directorate IV and Decommissioning
Division of Licensing Project Management
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Project No. 691

cc: See next page

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Mr. W. Glenn Warren

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