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From: Christopher Grimes
To: Brian Sheron; Ellis Merschoff; Jim Dyer; Luis Reyes; William Dean
Date: Wed, Jul 7, 2004 12:50 PM
Subject: UFM Status

On Thursday, July 8, the staff will present its proposed recommendation for a generic communication confirming the accuracy of ultrasonic flow meters (UFMs) used to measure plant power to the ACRS. The staff's recommendation was discussed with the interested parties on July 1. The News Flash summary of that meeting is attached. The two vendors, Westinghouse and Caldon, expressed concerns as follows:

Prior to July 1, Westinghouse expressed concerns regarding the potential impacts of the Task Group report and requested that the report be withheld from public disclosure. After calls with Westinghouse, on July 1, a non-proprietary version of the report was issued to Westinghouse and made publically available on July 2 (ML041770229). Westinghouse believes that the language and findings in the report are based on anecdotal incidents, does not reflect actions that Westinghouse has taken to address the operation of their AMAG Crossflow device, and will irreparably harm their competitive position.

During and following the public meeting on July 1, Caldon expressed concerns that the staff's presentation contains "factual inaccuracies," disregards the Task Group findings (the Caldon report was originally issued as a public version, ML041760370), and does not provide a technical basis for requiring users of their LEFM Check and LEFM CheckPlus in-line flow meters to confirm the accuracy by comparing instrument performance against measurement values of a fully clean ASME flow nozzle or venturi of known accuracy (which Caldon contends is impractical and not justified since there have not been any reported inaccuracies of those instruments).

Both vendors have claimed that the staff's efforts to address the UFM accuracy concerns overstate the problems with their instruments and understate the problems with their competitor's instruments.

The ACRS meeting is a information brief since the proposed generic communication is work-in-progress. Following the ACRS meeting the staff will consider feedback from the ACRS and prepare a formal recommendation for review by the CRGR.

CC: Richard Barrett

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--NRC STAFF IS CONSIDERING ISSUING A BULLETIN REQUIRING LICENSEES TO CONFIRM the accuracy of any ultrasonic flow meters (UFM) that are installed in their nuclear units. Details of the bulletin were uncertain based on discussions this morning at a public meeting involving NRC staff, utility representatives and UFM vendors Caldon and Westinghouse. The NRC is reacting to reports that Caldon and Westinghouse clamp-on UFM's at several plants produced inaccurate feedwater flow measurements resulting in operation of the plants for a period of time over their licensed thermal power limits. The staff today said it also has new questions about Caldon's latest UFM's, which are installed within a plant's piping. A recently released NRC report seemed to minimize agency concerns with those Caldon meters. Some Westinghouse and Caldon UFM's are used for small power uprates. Caldon representatives at the meeting today questioned NRC's proposed method for verifying the accuracy of UFM's. NRC staff is expected to revise its proposal in time for a briefing July 8 of the Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards.