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SUBJECT: Requests relief from specified ISI requirements in Section XI of ASME Boiler & Pressure Vessel Code,1989 Edition,no addenda.Encl contains request for relief 3-ISI-7 for NRC review & approval.

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March 26, 1999

10 CFR 50.55a(g)(5)(iii)

U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
ATTN: Document Control Desk
Washington, D.C. 20555

Gentlemen:

In the Matter of)
Tennessee Valley Authority)

Docket No. 50-296

BROWNS FERRY NUCLEAR PLANT (BFN) - UNIT 3 - AMERICAN SOCIETY OF MECHANICAL ENGINEERS (ASME) SECTION XI, INSERVICE INSPECTION - REQUEST FOR RELIEF 3-ISI-7

In accordance with 10 CFR 50.55a(g)(5)(iii), TVA is requesting relief from specified inservice inspection requirements in Section XI of the ASME Boiler and Pressure Vessel Code, 1989 Edition, (no addenda). The enclosure to this letter submits request for relief 3-ISI-7 for NRC review and approval.

TVA has determined that nine components have nondestructive examination (NDE) coverage limitations (90 percent or less coverage completed) which exceeds that specified in ASME Code Case N-460, "Alternative Examination Coverage for Class 1 and Class 2 Welds, Section XI, Division 1." The components are nine reactor pressure vessel (RPV) nozzle-to-vessel welds (ASME Section XI, Code Category B-D, nozzle-to-vessel welds). The calculated NDE coverage completed varied for each component, ranging between 64 and 77 percent. The limitations encountered during the performance of the ultrasonic (UT) examination were caused by component configuration and structural design. The nozzle contours and the proximity of the biological shield wall limits access to the required weld volume and nozzle inside radius section.

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The nozzle-to-vessel welds described above were examined during the first period (Cycle 8) of the BFN Unit 3 ASME Section XI, Inservice Inspection, Second Ten Year interval. In a letter to NRC dated January 12, 1999, TVA submitted ASME Section XI, inservice inspection and repair and replacement summary reports (NIS-1 and NIS-2) for Unit 3 Cycle 8 operation. In that letter, TVA committed to submit a request for relief by April 5, 1999, for the nozzle-to-vessel weld examination limitations described above.

TVA requests review of this relief request prior to the Unit 3 Cycle 10 (Spring 2002) refueling outage to support scheduled ASME Section XI outage activities. TVA submitted a similar request for relief for the BFN Unit 2 RPV nozzle-to-vessel weld examinations by letter dated April 3, 1998. NRC granted TVA's request for relief by letter dated February 23, 1999.

There are no new commitments contained in this letter. If you have any questions, please telephone me at (256) 729-2636.

Sincerely,

T. E. Abney
Manager of Licensing
and Industry Affairs

Enclosure
cc: See Page 3

Enclosure
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