Mr. Ronald DeGregorio August 30, 2000
Vice President Oyster Creek
AmerGen Energy Company, LLC
P.O. Box 388
Forked River, NJ 08731

SUBJECT: SAFETY EVALUATION OF THE REQUEST FOR RELIEF FROM THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF MECHANICAL ENGINEERS BOILER AND PRESSURE VESSEL CODE (ASME CODE) SECTION XI REQUIREMENTS FOR THE CONTAINMENT INSERVICE INSPECTION PROGRAM, OYSTER CREEK NUCLEAR GENERATING STATION (TAC NO. MA7858)

Dear Mr. DeGregorio:

By letter dated December 17, 1999, you submitted Relief Request (R-23) concerning the containment examination requirements for the Oyster Creek Nuclear Generating Station Containment Inservice Inspection (ISI) Program. You requested approval for the use of alternative inspection to support the preparation for scheduled ISI activities during the 2000 refueling outage. We have reviewed your request, and, based on the information provided, we conclude that the alternatives you have proposed will provide an acceptable level of quality and safety. Therefore, the proposed alternatives are authorized pursuant to 10 CFR 50.55a(a)(3)(ii) for the first interval of the IWE Containment Inservice Inspection Program.

On the date of the December 17, 1999, application, GPU Nuclear, Inc. (GPUN) was the licensed operator for Oyster Creek. On August 8, 2000, GPUN's ownership interest in Oyster Creek was transferred to AmerGen Energy Company, LLC (AmerGen). By letter dated August 10, 2000, AmerGen requested that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission continue to review and act upon all requests before the Commission which had been submitted by GPUN. Accordingly, the staff has completed its review of the requested relief request.

Our detailed evaluation and conclusions are documented in the enclosed safety evaluation.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Marsha Gamberoni, Chief, Section 1
Project Directorate I
Division of Licensing Project Management
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket No. 50-219

Enclosure: Safety Evaluation

cc w/encl: See next page

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Vice President Oyster Creek
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SAFETY EVALUATION BY THE OFFICE OF NUCLEAR REACTOR REGULATION

RELATED TO THE 10-YEAR INSERVICE INSPECTION

PROGRAM RELIEF REQUEST R-23

OYSTER CREEK NUCLEAR GENERATING STATION

DOCKET NO. 50-219

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the Federal Register dated August 8, 1996 (61 FR 41303), the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) amended its regulations, pursuant to 10 CFR 50.55a, to incorporate by reference the 1992 Edition with 1992 Addenda of Subsections IWE and IWL of Section Xl of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers Boiler and Pressure Vessel Code (ASME Code). Subsections IWE and IWL provide the requirements for inservice inspection (ISI) of Class CC (concrete containment), and Class MC (metallic containment) of light-water cooled nuclear power plants. The effective date for the amended rule was September 9, 1996, and it requires the licensees to incorporate the new requirements into their ISI plans and to complete the first containment inspection by September 9, 2001. However, a licensee may propose alternatives to or submit a request for relief from the requirements of the regulation pursuant to Section 50.55a(a)(3) or (g)(5) of Title 10 of the Code of Federal Regulations (10 CFR), respectively.

By letter dated December 17, 1999, GPU Nuclear, Inc. (GPUN), the licensee, proposed several alternatives to the requirements of Subsections IWE and IWL of Section XI of the ASME Code for its Oyster Creek Nuclear Generating Station (Oyster Creek). The NRC's findings with respect to authorizing the alternatives or denying the proposed request is discussed in this evaluation.

On the date of the December 17, 1999, application, GPU Nuclear, Inc. (GPUN) was the licensed operator for Oyster Creek. On August 8, 2000, GPUN's ownership interest in Oyster Creek was transferred to AmerGen Energy Company, LLC (AmerGen). By letter dated August 10, 2000, AmerGen requested that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission continue to review and act upon all requests before the Commission which had been submitted by GPUN. Accordingly, the staff has completed its review of the requested relief request.

2.0 EVALUATION

2.1 Relief Request No. 23 - Examination of Paint or Coatings Before Removal

2.1.1 Code Requirements

ASME Section XI, 1992 Edition, 1992 Addenda, Subarticle IWE-2500(b) requires that when paint or coatings are to be removed, the paint or coatings shall be visually examined in accordance with Table IWE-2500-1 before removing.

2.1.2 Specific Relief Requested

Relief is requested from the Code required visual examinations of paint and coatings before removal on all IWE Class MC components.

2.1.3 Licensee's Basis for Relief

The licensee states that:

> Pursuant to 10 CFR 50.55a(a)(3)(i) relief is requested for Oyster Creek on the basis that the proposed alternative provisions to the ASME Section XI Code requirements would provide an acceptable level of quality and safety.
>
> 10 CFR 50.55a was amended in the Federal Register to require the use of the 1992 Edition, 1992 Addenda, Section XI when performing containment inspections. Subarticle IWE-2500(b) requires that when paint or coatings are to be removed, a visual examination of the paint or coatings shall be performed in accordance with Table IWE-2500-1. Neither paint nor coatings were subjected to Code rules when they were originally applied and are not subject to ASME Section XI rules for repair or replacement in accordance with IWA-4111(b)(5). Degradation or discoloration of the paint or coating materials on the containment could be an indicator of potential degradation of the containment pressure boundary. Additional measures would have to be employed to determine the nature and extent of any degradation, if present.
>
> The activity of performing periodic containment or coating examinations and corrective maintenance is performed in accordance with the Oyster Creek maintenance program and the GPU Nuclear [the licensee's or AmerGen's] Operational Quality Assurance plan. The application of ASME Section XI rules for the removal of paint or coatings when unrelated to a Section XI repair or replacement activity, is a burden without a compensating increase in quality and safety.

2.1.4 Alternative Examinations

The paint and coatings in containment will be examined in accordance with the Oyster Creek maintenance program. If degradation of the coating is identified, additional measures will be applied to determine if the containment pressure boundary is affected. Although repairs to paint or coatings are not subject to the rules of ASME Section XI (Inquiry 97-22), repairs to the primary containment boundary, not including coatings, if required, would be conducted in

accordance with ASME Section XI Code rules. This relief is requested for the first inspection interval for containment inspections.

2.1.5 Staff Evaluation of Relief Request R-23

As discussed in the evaluation of Relief Request R-19, the staff finds that the licensee's coating program is adequate for monitoring the proper removal of the old paint and application of new coatings. To perform additional examinations before removal of the old paint and to document the condition of the old paint or coatings, (in addition to the licensee's program subjected to the quality assurance requirements of 10 CFR Part 50, Appendix B), would result in hardship to the licensee without a compensating increase in the level of quality and safety. On this basis, the staff concludes that the alternative coating program proposed by the licensee is acceptable for authorizing the licensee's proposed alternative to the requirement of Subsection IWE-2500(b) of the Code pursuant to 10 CFR 50.55a(a)(3)(ii).

3.0 CONCLUSION

On the basis discussed above, the NRC staff finds that the alternative proposed by the licensee will provide reasonable assurance of the containment integrity. Therefore, the request for relief is authorized pursuant to 10 CFR 50.55a(a)(3)(ii) on the basis that the alternative provides an acceptable level of quality and safety.

Principal Contributor: T. Cheng

Date: August 30, 2000

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Oyster Creek Nuclear Generating Station

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