

July 25, 2000

Mr. T. A. Coleman, Vice President
Government Relations
Framatome Cogema Fuels
3315 Old Forest Road
P.O. Box 10935
Lynchburg, VA 24506-0935

SUBJECT: BABCOCK AND WILCOX OWNERS GROUP - FIXED INCORE DETECTOR
MONITORING SYSTEM (TAC NO. MA6402)

Dear Mr. Coleman:

By letter dated August 3, 1999, Framatome Cogema Fuels (FCF) informed the NRC staff of a change that some owners of Babcock and Wilcox designed reactors may be making to their plant computer software. This change will involve replacing the pre predicted function tables and empirical functions within the Nuclear Applications Software Package (NAS) with data from the online simulator code, NEMO [Nodal Expansion Method Optimized]. The new system is called the Fixed Incore Detector Monitoring System (FIDMS).

The NAS was approved in a safety evaluation (SE) issued June 19, 1980, for Topical Report BAW-10123, and NEMO was approved in a SE issued January 29, 1993, for BAW-10180, Rev. 1. The NRC staff has reviewed the SEs for these topical reports and, based on this review, did not determine any condition on the approval of either report that would prohibit the change described in your letter.

In addition, the staff reviewed the attachment to your August 3, 1999, letter that contained the improvements to NAS that would be obtained from the online simulator. We agree that these are worthy improvements. Your August 3, 1999, letter also stated that FIDMS will be tested and qualified before implementation. Discussions with your staff and information in your letter dated June 23, 2000, confirmed that the testing and qualification would include documentation and would be performed at each site before implementation. Furthermore, this validation and verification will be carried out in compliance with the quality assurance programs at FCF and the utility. Based on this information, the staff finds the change to be acceptable.

Mr. T. A. Coleman

- 2 -

July 25, 2000

If you have any questions, please contact me at 301-415-1321 or Margaret Chatterton at 301-415-2889.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Stewart Bailey, Project Manager, Section 2
Project Directorate III
Division of Licensing Project Management
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Project No. 693

cc: Mr. F. McPhatter, Manager
Framatome Cogema Fuels
3315 Old Forest Road
P.O. Box 10935
Lynchburg, VA 24506-0935

Mr. Michael Schoppman
Licensing Manager
Framatome Technologies, Inc.
1700 Rockville Pike, Suite 525
Rockville, MD 20852-1631

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Sincerely,

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Lynchburg, VA 24506-0935

Mr. Michael Schoppman
Licensing Manager
Framatome Technologies, Inc.
1700 Rockville Pike, Suite 525
Rockville, MD 20852-1631

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