

December 4, 2000

Mr. Oliver D. Kingsley, President
Nuclear Generation Group
Commonwealth Edison Company
Executive Towers West III
1400 Opus Place, Suite 500
Downers Grove, IL 60515

SUBJECT: BYRON STATION, UNITS 1 AND 2, AND BRAIDWOOD STATION, UNITS 1 AND 2 - NEW CRITERIA FOR WELD WIDTH IN WESTINGHOUSE STEAM GENERATOR TUBE LASER WELDED SLEEVES REPAIR METHODOLOGY (TAC NOS. MB0071, MB0072, MB0069 AND MB0070)

Dear Mr. Kingsley:

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) had approved the installation of laser welded sleeves, using the Westinghouse repair methodology, as an alternative to plugging defective steam generator (SG) tubes at Byron Station, Units 1 and 2, and Braidwood Station, Units 1 and 2, in Amendments 58 and 46, respectively. After the NRC had approved the use of this alternative, Westinghouse identified an issue with the methodology related to the width of the welds. The NRC and Westinghouse have agreed on a resolution to this issue. In a letter dated July 31, 2000, Commonwealth Edison Company (ComEd) committed to implement Westinghouse's resolution to this issue concerning the acceptable width for laser welded sleeves used in the repair of SG tubes.

In the resolution, Westinghouse modified the recommended inspection procedure for future welds to include a criterion that establishes the minimum average width of each weld in order to meet the requirements of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) Section III Code for design-by-analysis. Any weld determined to have an average width of less than 21 mils is required to have an engineering evaluation to determine its adequacy. Using this methodology, special considerations may be made to provide for infrequently accepting welds with average widths of not less than 19 mils.

It is the NRC's understanding that the Byron and Braidwood Station original Unit 1 Westinghouse Model D4 steam generators have been replaced with Babcock and Wilcox International (BWI) steam generators. Therefore, the laser welded sleeve repair option no longer applies to Unit 1 at each station as the Westinghouse Technical Report addressing laser welded sleeves applies only to Westinghouse Model D4 and D5 steam generators. Consequently, this repair option applies only to the Byron Station and Braidwood Station Units 2 Westinghouse Model D5 steam generators. The July 31, 2000, letter informed the NRC that there are currently no laser welded sleeves installed in the Unit 2 steam generators and should ComEd decide to install laser welded sleeves in the Unit 2 steam generators in the future, these laser welded sleeves will be installed in conformance with the criteria established by Westinghouse described above.

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ComEd's commitment to implement the recommendations made by Westinghouse to resolve the issue with the width of the welds used in the laser welded sleeve repair methodology, provides the NRC with reasonable assurance that SG tube integrity will be maintained should this methodology be used on the Unit 2 SGs. If you have questions regarding this issue, please contact me at (301) 415-3019. This completes the NRC review of this issue for Byron Station, Units 1 and 2, and Braidwood Station, Units 1 and 2.

Sincerely,

/RA/

George F. Dick, Jr., Sr. Project Manager, Section 2
Project Directorate III
Division of Licensing Project Management
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket Nos. STN 50-454, STN 50-455,
STN 50-456 and STN 50-457

cc: See next page

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Byron/Braidwood Stations

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