

May 2, 2002

MEMORANDUM TO: File

FROM: Jack N. Donohew, Senior Project Manager, Section 2
Project Directorate IV /RA/
Division of Licensing Project Management
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

SUBJECT: FINAL CONFERENCE CALL WITH WOLF CREEK GENERATING
STATION ON REACTOR PRESSURE HEAD (RPV) HEAD INSPECTION
PLAN TO MEET NRC BULLETINS 2001-01 AND 2002-01 (TAC NO.
MB4592)

Wolf Creek Generating Station (WCGS) began a refueling outage on Friday, March 22, 2002. On March 26, 2002, the NRC staff and the licensee had a conference call to discuss the licensee's plans for assessing the condition of their RPV head in response to NRC Bulletins 2001-01, "Circumferential Cracking of Reactor Pressure Vessel Head Penetration Nozzles," and 2002-02, "Reactor Pressure Vessel Head Degradation and Reactor Coolant Pressure Boundary Integrity." This call was documented in the memo dated April 10, 2002 (ADAMS Accession No. ML020980408). The plant is considered to be of low susceptibility to nozzle cracking as discussed in NRC Bulletin 2001-01.

In a second and third call on April 5 and 23, 2002, the licensee explained the results of its RPV head inspection as follows: (1) they did a 100 percent effective visual examination of the carbon steel surfaces of the RPV vessel head including an examination around the entire circumference of all the vessel head penetrations (i.e., 360-degree coverage); (2) they found no areas of wastage or degradation of the head; (3) they also found no evidence of leakage through the head, (4) boric acid, which had leaked through isolation valves on the head vent line, was found on top of the insulation and was cleaned off the insulation; (5) the minor amount of boric acid found on the surface of the head was found to be in the form of either a glaze on the surface where the carbon steel could be seen through the glaze or loose spheroids or "snowballs" that were one-quarter to a half-inch in diameter; and (6) indications of leakage through the canopy seal welds were investigated through visual video enhancing and the welds that showed evidence of leakage through pits at the weld were clamped to prevent further leakage. The insulation on the head is stainless steel mirror insulation panels that clip together. The licensee stated that the small amount of boric found on the surface of the head was not cleaned off because it did not pose a threat to the integrity of the head.

Based on the preliminary findings from Davis-Besse, the inspections performed by the licensee at WCGS, and the plant susceptibility to nozzle cracking, the NRC staff did not identify any issues that needed additional follow-up prior to plant restart. The NRC staff will document its formal review after receiving the licensee's Bulletin 2002-01 response for the WCGS RPV head inspection, which is 30 days after the plant restart. The licensee's initial response to the bulletin was submitted in its letter dated April 3, 2002.

Docket No. 50-482

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