

July 16, 2003

Mr. John L. Skolds, President
and Chief Nuclear Officer
Exelon Nuclear
Exelon Generation Company, LLC
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer
AmerGen Energy Company, LLC
200 Exelon Way, KSA 3-E
Kennett Square, PA 19348

SUBJECT: BRAIDWOOD STATION, UNITS 1 AND 2; BYRON STATION, UNITS 1 AND 2;
CLINTON POWER STATION, UNIT 1; DRESDEN NUCLEAR POWER
STATION, UNITS 2 AND 3; LASALLE COUNTY STATION, UNITS 1 AND 2;
OYSTER CREEK NUCLEAR GENERATING STATION; PEACH BOTTOM
ATOMIC POWER STATION, UNITS 2 AND 3; QUAD CITIES NUCLEAR
POWER STATION, UNITS 1 AND 2; THREE MILE ISLAND NUCLEAR
STATION, UNIT 1 - AMERICAN SOCIETY OF MECHANICAL ENGINEERS
BOILER AND PRESSURE VESSEL CODE - RELIEF FOR QUALIFICATION
REQUIREMENTS FOR DISSIMILAR METAL PIPING WELDS (TAC NOS.
MB8142, MB8143, MB8144, MB8145, MB8146, MB8147, MB8148, MB8149,
MB8150, MB8151, MB8152, MB8153, MB8154, MB8155, AND MB8156)

Dear Mr. Skolds:

By letter dated March 26, 2003, Exelon Generation Company, LLC and AmerGen Energy Company, LLC (the licensees), submitted proposed alternatives to the requirements of Title 10 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (10 CFR), Section 50.55a, concerning the requirements of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers Boiler and Pressure Vessel Code (ASME Code) for inservice inspection (ISI) programs at the units listed in the subject line above.

Supplement 10 to Appendix VIII, "Performance Demonstration for Ultrasonic Examination Systems," of Section XI of the ASME Code contains the qualification requirements for procedures, equipment, and personnel involved with examining dissimilar metal welds using ultrasonic techniques. In lieu of these ASME Code requirements, the licensees requested to use the dissimilar metal weld criteria of the Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI)-Performance Demonstration Initiative (PDI) Program.

Based on the information provided by the licensees, the NRC staff concludes that the proposed alternative will provide an acceptable level of quality and safety. Therefore, the use of the proposed alternative is authorized pursuant to 10 CFR 50.55a(a)(3)(i) for the remainder of the current 10-year ISI interval at each unit. The NRC staff's safety evaluation is enclosed.

J. Skolds

- 2 -

If you need clarification of this approval, please contact the project manager, Mr. John P. Boska, at (301) 415-2901.

Sincerely,

/RA/

James W. Clifford, Chief, Section 2
Project Directorate I
Division of Licensing Project Management
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket Nos. 50-456, 50-457, 50-454, 50-455, 50-461, 50-237, 50-249, 50-373, 50-374, 50-219, 50-277, 50-278, 50-254, 50-265, and 50-289

Enclosure: Safety Evaluation

cc w/encl: See next page

J. Skolds

- 2 -

If you need clarification of this approval, please contact the project manager, Mr. John P. Boska, at (301) 415-2901.

Sincerely,

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James W. Clifford, Chief, Section 2
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Division of Licensing Project Management
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket Nos. 50-456, 50-457, 50-454, 50-455, 50-461, 50-237, 50-249, 50-373, 50-374, 50-219, 50-277, 50-278, 50-254, 50-265, and 50-289

Enclosure: Safety Evaluation

cc w/encl: See next page

DISTRIBUTION:

PUBLIC	PDI-1 R/F	PDI-2 R/F	PD3-2 R/	CHolden	WRuland
JClifford	RLaufer	AMendiola	JBoska	MO'Brien	BPlatchek, R-I
ACRS	OGC	TChan	DNaujock	RDavis	GGrant, R-III
MChawla	GDick	DPickett	LRossbach	WMacon	CLyon
DSkay	PTam	SLittle	PCoates	WHeld	GHill (30)
Tim McGinty, EDO, Rgn-I		HNieh, EDO, Rgn-III		MRing, R-III	

Accession Number: ML031970111

* SE input provided - no major changes made

OFFICE	PDI-2/PM	PDI-2/LA	EMCB/SC*	OGC	
NAME	JBoska	MO'Brien	TChan	CMarco	
DATE	6/30/02	6/30/03	SE dated 5/19/03	7/10/03	
OFFICE	PD1-1/SC	PD3-2/SC	PD1-2/SC		
NAME	RLaufer	GDick for AMendiola	JClifford		
DATE	7/10/03	7/11/03	7/14/03		

Official Record Copy

Byron and Braidwood, Units 1 and 2

cc:

Site Vice President - Byron
Exelon Generation Company, LLC
4450 N. German Church Road
Byron, IL 61010-9794

Byron Station Plant Manager
Exelon Generation Company, LLC
4450 N. German Church Road
Byron, IL 61010-9794

Regulatory Assurance Manager - Byron
Exelon Generation Company, LLC
4450 N. German Church Road
Byron, IL 61010-9794

Senior Vice President, Nuclear Services
Exelon Generation Company, LLC
4300 Winfield Road
Warrenville, IL 60555

Senior Vice President
Mid-West Regional Operating Group
Exelon Generation Company, LLC
4300 Winfield Road
Warrenville, IL 60555

Vice President
Mid-West Operations Support
Exelon Generation Company, LLC
4300 Winfield Road
Warrenville, IL 60555

Vice President - Licensing and
Regulatory Affairs
Exelon Generation Company, LLC
4300 Winfield Road
Warrenville, IL 60555

Director Licensing
Mid-West Regional Operating Group
Exelon Generation Company, LLC
4300 Winfield Road
Warrenville, IL 60555

Manager Licensing - Byron & Braidwood
Exelon Generation Company, LLC
4300 Winfield Road
Warrenville, IL 60555

Senior Counsel, Nuclear
Mid-West Regional Operating Group
Exelon Generation Company, LLC
4300 Winfield Road
Warrenville, IL 60555

Document Control Desk-Licensing
Exelon Generation Company, LLC
4300 Winfield Road
Warrenville, IL 60555

Ms. C. Sue Hauser, Project Manager
Westinghouse Electric Corporation
Energy Systems Business Unit
Post Office Box 355
Pittsburgh, PA 15230

Joseph Gallo
Gallo & Ross
1025 Connecticut Ave., NW, Suite 1014
Washington, DC 20036

Howard A. Learner
Environmental Law and Policy
Center of the Midwest
35 East Wacker Dr., Suite 1300
Chicago, IL 60601-2110

U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Byron Resident Inspectors Office
4448 N. German Church Road
Byron, IL 61010-9750

Regional Administrator, Region III
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
801 Warrenville Road
Lisle, IL 60532-4351

Byron/Braidwood (cont'd)

cc:

Ms. Lorraine Creek
RR 1, Box 182
Manteno, IL 60950

Chairman, Ogle County Board
Post Office Box 357
Oregon, IL 61061

Mrs. Phillip B. Johnson
1907 Stratford Lane
Rockford, IL 61107

George L. Edgar
Morgan, Lewis and Bockius
1800 M Street, NW
Washington, DC 20036-5869

Attorney General
500 S. Second Street
Springfield, IL 62701

U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Braidwood Resident Inspectors Office
35100 S. Rt. 53, Suite 79
Braceville, IL 60407

Illinois Emergency Management
Agency
Division of Disaster Assistance &
Preparedness
110 East Adams Street
Springfield, IL 62701-1109

Chairman
Will County Board of Supervisors
Will County Board Courthouse
Joliet, IL 60434

Ms. Bridget Little Rorem
Appleseed Coordinator
117 N. Linden Street
Essex, IL 60935

Site Vice President - Braidwood
Exelon Generation Company, LLC
35100 S. Rt. 53, Suite 84
Braceville, IL 60407-9619

Braidwood Station Manager
Exelon Generation Company, LLC
35100 S. Rt. 53, Suite 84
Braceville, IL 60407-9619

Regulatory Assurance Manager - Braidwood
Exelon Generation Company, LLC
35100 S. Rt. 53, Suite 84
Braceville, IL 60407-9619

Illinois Department of Nuclear Safety
Office of Nuclear Facility Safety
1035 Outer Park Drive
Springfield, IL 62704

Clinton Power Station, Unit 1

cc:

Site Vice President - Clinton Power Station
AmerGen Energy Company, LLC
Clinton Power Station
RR 3, Box 228
Clinton, IL 61727-9351

Clinton Power Station Plant Manager
AmerGen Energy Company, LLC
Clinton Power Station
RR 3, Box 228
Clinton, IL 61727-9351

Regulatory Assurance Manager - Clinton
AmerGen Energy Company, LLC
Clinton Power Station
RR 3, Box 228
Clinton, IL 61727-9351

Resident Inspector
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
RR #3, Box 229A
Clinton, IL 61727

Dresden, Units 2 and 3

cc:

R. T. Hill
Licensing Services Manager
General Electric Company
175 Curtner Avenue, M/C 481
San Jose, CA 95125

Chairman
Grundy County Board
Administration Building
1320 Union Street
Morris, IL 60450

Chairman of DeWitt County
c/o County Clerk's Office
DeWitt County Courthouse
Clinton, IL 61727

J. W. Blattner
Project Manager
Sargent & Lundy Engineers
55 East Monroe Street
Chicago, IL 60603

Site Vice President - Dresden Nuclear Power
Station
Exelon Generation Company, LLC
6500 N. Dresden Road
Morris, IL 60450-9765

Dresden Nuclear Power Station
Plant Manager
Exelon Generation Company, LLC
6500 N. Dresden Road
Morris, IL 60450-9765

Regulatory Assurance Manager - Dresden
Exelon Generation Company, LLC
6500 N. Dresden Road
Morris, IL 60450-9765

Dresden Resident Inspectors Office
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
6500 N. Dresden Road
Morris, IL 60450-9766

Manager Licensing - Dresden & Quad Cities
Exelon Generation Company, LLC
4300 Winfield Road
Warrenville, IL 60555

LaSalle, Units 1 and 2

cc:

Robert Cushing, Chief, Public Utilities Div. Illinois
Attorney General's Office
100 W. Randolph Street
Chicago, IL 60601

Site Vice President - LaSalle County Station
Exelon Generation Company, LLC
2601 North 21st Road
Marseilles, IL 61341-9757

LaSalle County Station Plant Manager
Exelon Generation Company, LLC
2601 North 21st Road
Marseilles, IL 61341-9757

Regulatory Assurance Manager - LaSalle
Exelon Generation Company, LLC
2601 North 21st Road
Marseilles, IL 61341-9757

Manager Licensing - Clinton and LaSalle
Exelon Generation Company, LLC
4300 Winfield Road
Warrenville, IL 60555

U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
LaSalle Resident Inspectors Office
2605 North 21st Road
Marseilles, IL 61341-9757

Phillip P. Steptoe, Esquire
Sidley and Austin
One First National Plaza
Chicago, IL 60603

Assistant Attorney General
100 W. Randolph St. Suite 12
Chicago, IL 60601

Chairman
LaSalle County Board
707 Etna Road
Ottawa, IL 61350

Chairman
Illinois Commerce Commission
527 E. Capitol Avenue, Leland Building
Springfield, IL 62706

Oyster Creek Nuclear Generating Station

cc:

Site Vice President
Oyster Creek Generating Station
AmerGen Energy Company, LLC
P.O. Box 388
Forked River, NJ 08731

Oyster Creek Generating Station Plant
Manager
AmerGen Energy Company, LLC
P.O. Box 388
Forked River, NJ 08731

Regulatory Assurance Manager - Oyster
Creek
AmerGen Energy Company, LLC
P.O. Box 388
Forked River, NJ 08731

Kevin P. Gallen, Esquire
Morgan, Lewis, & Bockius LLP
1800 M Street, NW
Washington, DC 20036-5869

Kent Tosch, Chief
New Jersey Department of
Environmental Protection
Bureau of Nuclear Engineering
CN 415
Trenton, NJ 08625

Mayor of Lacey Township
818 West Lacey Road
Forked River, NJ 08731

Senior Resident Inspector
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
P.O. Box 445
Forked River, NJ 08731

J. Rogge, Region I
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
475 Allendale Road
King of Prussia, PA 19406-1415

Manager Licensing - Oyster Creek and
Three Mile Island
AmerGen Energy Company, LLC
Nuclear Group Headquarters
Correspondence Control
P.O. Box 160
Kennett Square, PA 19348

Peach Bottom, Units 2 and 3

cc:

Site Vice President
Peach Bottom Atomic Power Station
Exelon Generation Company, LLC
1848 Lay Road
Delta, PA 17314

Peach Bottom Atomic Power Station Plant
Manager
Exelon Generation Company, LLC
1848 Lay Road
Delta, PA 17314

Vice President, General Counsel and
Secretary
Exelon Generation Company, LLC
300 Exelon Way
Kennett Square, PA 19348

Regulatory Assurance Manager - Peach
Bottom
Exelon Generation Company, LLC
1848 Lay Road
Delta, PA 17314

Regional Administrator, Region I
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
475 Allendale Road
King of Prussia, PA 19406

Resident Inspector
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Peach Bottom Atomic Power Station
P.O. Box 399
Delta, PA 17314

Correspondence Control Desk
Exelon Generation Company, LLC
200 Exelon Way, KSA 1-N-1
Kennett Square, PA 19348

Mr. Roland Fletcher
Department of Environment
Radiological Health Program
2400 Broening Highway
Baltimore, MD 21224

Manager Licensing-Limerick and Peach Bottom
Exelon Generation Company, LLC
Nuclear Group Headquarters
Correspondence Control
P.O. Box 160
Kennett Square, PA 19348

Director - Licensing
Mid-Atlantic Regional Operating Group
Exelon Generation Company, LLC
Nuclear Group Headquarters
Correspondence Control
P.O. Box 160
Kennett Square, PA 19348

Senior Vice President
Mid-Atlantic Regional Operating Group
Exelon Generation Company, LLC
200 Exelon Way, KSA 3-N
Kennett Square, PA 19348

Vice President, Mid-Atlantic Operations Support
Exelon Generation Company, LLC
200 Exelon Way, KSA 3-N
Kennett Square, PA 19348

Chief-Division of Nuclear Safety
PA Dept. of Environmental Protection
P.O. Box 8469
Harrisburg, PA 17105-8469

Board of Supervisors
Peach Bottom Township
575 Broad Street Ext.
Delta, PA 17314-9203

Mr. Richard McLean
Power Plant and Environmental
Review Division
Department of Natural Resources
B-3, Tawes State Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Manager-Financial Control & Co-Owner
Affairs
Public Service Electric and Gas Company
P.O. Box 236
Hancocks Bridge, NJ 08038-0236

Dr. Judith Johnsrud
National Energy Committee
Sierra Club
433 Orlando Avenue
State College, PA 16803

Quad Cities, Units 1 and 2

cc:

Site Vice President - Quad Cities Nuclear
Power Station
Exelon Generation Company, LLC
22710 206th Avenue N.
Cordova, IL 61242-9740

Quad Cities Nuclear Power Station Plant
Manager
Exelon Generation Company, LLC
22710 206th Avenue N.
Cordova, IL 61242-9740

Regulatory Assurance Manager - Quad
Cities
Exelon Generation Company, LLC
22710 206th Avenue N.
Cordova, IL 61242-9740

Quad Cities Resident Inspectors Office
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
22712 206th Avenue N.
Cordova, IL 61242

David C. Tubbs
MidAmerican Energy Company
One River Center Place
106 E. Second, P.O. Box 4350
Davenport, IA 52808-4350

Vice President - Law and Regulatory Affairs
MidAmerican Energy Company
One River Center Place
106 E. Second Street
P.O. Box 4350
Davenport, IA 52808

Chairman
Rock Island County Board of Supervisors
1504 3rd Avenue
Rock Island County Office Bldg.
Rock Island, IL 61201

Three Mile Island, Unit 1

cc:

Eric Epstein
TMI Alert
4100 Hillsdale Road
Harrisburg, PA 17112

Site Vice President - Three Mile Island
Nuclear Station Unit 1
AmerGen Energy Company, LLC
P. O. Box 480
Middletown, PA 17057

Three Mile Island Nuclear Station Unit 1
Plant Manager
AmerGen Energy Company, LLC
P. O. Box 480
Middletown, PA 17057

Regulatory Assurance Manager - Three Mile
Island Unit 1
AmerGen Energy Company, LLC
P.O. Box 480
Middletown, PA 17057

Chairman
Board of County Commissioners
of Dauphin County
Dauphin County Courthouse
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Chairman
Board of Supervisors
of Londonderry Township
R.D. #1, Geyers Church Road
Middletown, PA 17057

Senior Resident Inspector (TMI-1)
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
P.O. Box 219
Middletown, PA 17057

Michael A. Schoppman
Framatome ANP
Suite 705
1911 North Ft. Myer Drive
Rosslyn, VA 22209

SAFETY EVALUATION BY THE OFFICE OF NUCLEAR REACTOR REGULATION

PRESSURE RETAINING PIPING WELDS EXAMINATION

EXELON GENERATION COMPANY, LLC

AMERGEN ENERGY COMPANY, LLC

BRAIDWOOD STATION, UNITS 1 AND 2

BYRON STATION, UNITS 1 AND 2

CLINTON POWER STATION, UNIT 1

DRESDEN NUCLEAR POWER STATION, UNITS 2 AND 3

LASALLE COUNTY STATION, UNITS 1 AND 2

OYSTER CREEK NUCLEAR GENERATING STATION

PEACH BOTTOM ATOMIC POWER STATION, UNITS 2 AND 3

QUAD CITIES NUCLEAR POWER STATION, UNITS 1 AND 2

THREE MILE ISLAND NUCLEAR STATION, UNIT 1

DOCKET NOS. 50-456, 50-457, 50-454, 50-455, 50-461, 50-237, 50-249, 50-373, 50-374,

50-219, 50-277, 50-278, 50-254, 50-265, and 50-289

1.0 INTRODUCTION

By letter dated March 26, 2003, Exelon Generation Company, LLC, and AmerGen Energy Company, LLC, (the licensees), submitted proposed alternatives to the requirements of Title 10 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (10 CFR), Section 50.55a, concerning the inservice inspection (ISI) programs for the plants listed in Table 1 below. Table 1 also provides a list of the current 10-year ISI interval and other data for each of the plants.

Supplement 10 to Appendix VIII, "Performance Demonstration for Ultrasonic Examination Systems," of Section XI of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers Boiler and Pressure Vessel Code (ASME Code) contains the qualification requirements for procedures, equipment, and personnel involved with examining dissimilar metal welds using ultrasonic techniques. In lieu of these ASME Code requirements, the licensees requested to use the dissimilar metal

Enclosure

weld criteria of the Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI)-Performance Demonstration Initiative (PDI) Program.

TABLE 1: List of plants, type, ISI 10-year interval and ASME Code of record.

<u>PLANT / TYPE</u>	<u>ISI INTERVAL</u>	<u>ASME EDITION</u>	<u>ISI START DATE</u>	<u>ISI END DATE</u>	<u>DOCKET #</u>
Braidwood Station, Unit 1, PWR	Second	1989 Edition, no addenda	July 29, 1998	July 28, 2008	50-456
Braidwood Station, Unit 2, PWR	Second	1989 Edition, no addenda	October 17, 1998	October 16, 2008	50-457
Byron Station, Unit 1 PWR	Second	1989 Edition, no addenda	June 30, 1996	June 30, 2005	50-454
Byron Station, Unit 2 PWR	Second	1989 Edition, no addenda	August 16, 1998	August 16, 2007	50-455
Clinton Power Station, Unit 1, BWR	Second	1989 Edition, no addenda	January 1, 2000	December 31, 2009	50-461
Dresden Nuclear Power Station, Unit 2, BWR	Fourth	1995 Edition, 1996 Addenda	January 20, 2003	January 19, 2013	50-237
Dresden Nuclear Power Station, Unit 3, BWR	Fourth	1995 Edition, 1996 Addenda	January 20, 2003	January 19, 2013	50-249
LaSalle County Station, Unit 1, BWR	Second	1989 Edition, no addenda	November 23, 1994	October 11, 2006	50-373
LaSalle County Station, Unit 2, BWR	Second	1989 Edition, no addenda	October 17, 1994	July 4, 2007	50-374
Oyster Creek Nuclear Generating Station, BWR	Fourth	1995 Edition, 1996 Addenda	October 15, 2002	October 14, 2012	50-219
Peach Bottom Atomic Power Station, Unit 2, BWR	Third	1989 Edition, no addenda	August 15, 1998	August 14, 2008	50-277
Peach Bottom Atomic Power Station, Unit 3, BWR	Third	1989 Edition, no addenda	August 15, 1998	August 14, 2008	50-278
Quad Cities Nuclear Power Station, Unit 1, BWR	Fourth	1995 Edition, 1996 Addenda	March 10, 2003	March 9, 2013	50-254
Quad Cities Nuclear Power Station, Unit 2, BWR	Fourth	1995 Edition, 1996 Addenda	March 10, 2003	March 9, 2013	50-265
Three Mile Island Nuclear Station, Unit 1, PWR	Third	1995 Edition, 1996 Addenda	April 20, 2001	April 19, 2011	50-289

2.0 REGULATORY EVALUATION

Section 50.55a(g) requires that ISI of the ASME Code, Class 1, 2, and 3 components be performed in accordance with Section XI of the ASME Code and applicable addenda, except where specific written relief has been granted by the Commission pursuant to 10 CFR 50.55a(g)(6)(i). According to 10 CFR 50.55a(a)(3), alternatives to the requirements of paragraph (g) may be used, when authorized by the NRC, if an applicant demonstrates that the proposed alternatives would provide an acceptable level of quality and safety or if the specified requirement would result in hardship or unusual difficulty without a compensating increase in the level of quality and safety.

Pursuant to 10 CFR 50.55a(g)(4), ASME Code, Class 1, 2, and 3 components (including supports) shall meet the requirements, except the design and access provisions and preservice examination requirements, set forth in the ASME Code to the extent practical within the limitations of design, geometry, and materials of construction of the components. The regulations require that ISI of components conducted during the first 10-year interval and subsequent intervals comply with the requirements in the latest edition and addenda of Section XI of the ASME Code incorporated by reference in 10 CFR 50.55a(b) 12 months prior to the start of the 120-month interval, subject to the limitations and modifications listed therein. The ISI Code of record for each plant is listed in Table 1 above.

3.0 TECHNICAL EVALUATION

3.1 Components for Which Relief is Requested

Dissimilar metal piping welds subject to ultrasonic examination using procedures, personnel, and equipment qualified to the 1995 Edition, 1996 Addenda, of the ASME Code, Section XI, Appendix VIII, Supplement 10, "Qualification Requirements for Dissimilar Metal Piping Welds."

3.2 ASME Code Requirements (as stated by the licensees)

The following paragraphs or statements are from ASME [Code] Section XI, Appendix VIII, Supplement 10, and identify the specific requirements that are included in this request for relief.

Item 1 - Paragraph 1.1(b) states in part - Pipe diameters within a range of 0.9 to 1.5 times a nominal diameter shall be considered equivalent.

Item 2 - Paragraph 1.1(d) states - All flaws in the specimen set shall be cracks.

Item 3 - Paragraph 1.1(d)(1) states - At least 50% of the cracks shall be in austenitic material. At least 50% of the cracks in austenitic material shall be contained wholly in weld or buttering material. At least 10% of the cracks shall be in ferritic material. The remainder of the cracks may be in either austenitic or ferritic material.

Item 4 - Paragraph 1.2(b) states in part - The number of unflawed grading units shall be at least twice the number of flawed grading units.

Item 5 - Paragraph 1.2(c)(1) and 1.3(c) state in part - At least 1/3 of the flaws, rounded to the next higher whole number, shall have depths between 10% and 30% of the nominal pipe wall thickness. Paragraph 1.4(b) distribution table requires 20% of the flaws to have depths between 10% and 30%.

Item 6 - Paragraph 2.0 first sentence states - The specimen inside surface and identification shall be concealed from the candidate.

Item 7 - Paragraph 2.2(b) states in part - The regions containing a flaw to be sized shall be identified to the candidate.

Item 8 - Paragraph 2.2(c) states in part - For a separate length sizing test, the regions of each specimen containing a flaw to be sized shall be identified to the candidate.

Item 9 - Paragraph 2.3(a) states - For the depth sizing test, 80% of the flaws shall be sized at a specific location on the surface of the specimen identified to the candidate.

Item 10 - Paragraph 2.3(b) states - For the remaining flaws, the regions of each specimen containing a flaw to be sized shall be identified to the candidate. The candidate shall determine the maximum depth of the flaw in each region.

Item 11 - Table VIII-S2-1 provides the false call criteria when the number of unflawed grading units is at least twice the number of flawed grading units.

3.3 Licensees' Proposed Alternatives and Basis for Licensing Action Request

The licensees proposed the following alternatives to the ASME Code, Section XI, Appendix VIII, Supplement 10, requirements during the remainder of the current 10-year ISI intervals for the plants in Table 1. The proposed alternatives, as stated by the licensees, will be implemented through the PDI program.

Item I - The proposed alternative to Paragraph 1.1(b) states:

"The specimen set shall include the minimum and maximum pipe diameters and thicknesses for which the examination procedure is applicable. Pipe diameters within a range of ½ in. (13 mm) of the nominal diameter shall be considered equivalent. Pipe diameters larger than 24 in. (610 mm) shall be considered to be flat. When a range of thicknesses is to be examined, a thickness tolerance of ± 25% is acceptable."

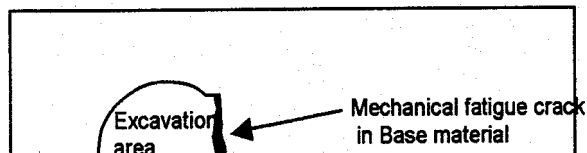
Technical Basis - The change in the minimum pipe diameter tolerance from 0.9 times the diameter to the nominal diameter minus 0.5 inch provides tolerances more in line with industry practice. Though the alternative is less stringent for small pipe diameters, they typically have a thinner wall thickness than larger diameter piping. A thinner wall thickness results in

shorter sound path distances that reduce the detrimental effects of the curvature. This change maintains consistency between Supplement 10 and the recent revision to Supplement 2.

Item 2 - The proposed alternative to Paragraph 1.1(d) states:

“At least 60% of the flaws shall be cracks, the remainder shall be alternative flaws. Specimens with [intergranular stress corrosion cracking] IGSCC shall be used when available. Alternative flaws, if used, shall provide crack-like reflective characteristics and shall be limited to the case where implantation of cracks produces spurious reflectors that are uncharacteristic of actual flaws. Alternative flaw mechanisms shall have a tip width of less than or equal to 0.002 in. (.05 mm).”

Technical Basis - As illustrated below, implanting a crack requires excavation of the base material on at least one side of the flaw. While this may be satisfactory for ferritic materials, it does not produce a useable axial flaw in austenitic materials because the sound beam, which normally passes only through base material, must now travel through weld material on at least one side, producing an unrealistic flaw response. In addition, it is important to preserve the dendritic structure present in field welds that would otherwise be destroyed by the implantation process. To resolve these issues, the proposed alternative allows the use of up to 40% fabricated flaws as an alternative flaw mechanism under controlled conditions. The fabricated flaws are isostatically compressed which produces ultrasonic reflective characteristics similar to tight cracks. Note, to avoid confusion the proposed alternative modifies instances of the term “cracks” or “cracking” to the term “flaws” because of the use of “alternative flaw mechanisms.”



Item 3 - The proposed alternative to Paragraph 1.1 (d)(1) states:

“At least 80% of the flaws shall be contained wholly in weld or buttering material. At least one and a maximum of 10% of the flaws shall be in ferritic base material. At least one and a maximum of 10% of the flaws shall be in austenitic base material.”

Technical Basis - Under the current [ASME] Code, as few as 25% of the flaws are contained in austenitic weld or buttering material. The metallurgical structure of austenitic weld material is ultrasonically more challenging than either ferritic or austenitic base material. The proposed alternative is therefore more challenging than the current [ASME] Code.

Item 4 - The proposed alternative to Paragraph 1.2(b) states:

“Detection sets shall be selected from Table VIII-S10-1. The number of unflawed grading units shall be at least one and a half times the number of flawed grading units.”

Technical Basis - New Table VIII-S10-1 provides a statistically based ratio between the number of unflawed grading units and the number of flawed grading units. Based on information provided by the PDI, the proposed alternative reduces the ratio to 1.5 times to reduce the number of test samples to a more reasonable number. However, the statistical basis used for screening personnel and procedures is still maintained at the same level with competent personnel being successful and less skilled personnel being unsuccessful. The acceptance criteria for the statistical basis are in Table VIII-S10-1.

Item 5 - The proposed alternative to the flaw distribution requirements of Paragraph 1.2(c)(1) (detection) and 1.3(c) (length) is to use the Paragraph 1.4(b) (depth) distribution table (see below) for all qualifications.

<u>Flaw Depth (% Wall Thickness)</u>	<u>Minimum Number of Flaws</u>
10-30%	20%
31-60%	20%
61-100%	20%

Technical Basis - The proposed alternative uses the depth sizing distribution for both detection and depth sizing because it provides for a better distribution of flaw sizes within the test set. This distribution allows candidates to perform detection, length, and depth sizing demonstrations simultaneously utilizing the same test set. The requirement that at least 75% of the flaws shall be in the range of 10 to 60% of wall thickness provides an overall distribution tolerance yet the distribution uncertainty decreases the possibilities for testmanship that would be inherent to a uniform distribution. It must be noted that it is possible to achieve the same distribution utilizing the present requirements, but it is preferable to make the criteria consistent.

Item 6 - The proposed alternative to Paragraph 2.0 first sentence states:

“For qualifications from the outside surface, the specimen inside surface and identification shall be concealed from the candidate. When qualifications are performed from the inside surface, the flaw location and specimen identification shall be obscured to maintain a “blind test”.”

Technical Basis - The current [ASME] Code requires that the inside surface be concealed from the candidate. This makes qualifications conducted from the inside of the pipe (e.g., [pressurized-water reactor] PWR nozzle to safe end welds) impractical. The proposed alternative differentiates between

[inner diameter] ID and [outer diameter] OD scanning surfaces, requires that they be conducted separately, and requires that flaws be concealed from the candidate.

Items 7 and 8 - The proposed alternatives to Paragraph 2.2(b) and 2.2(c) state:

“... containing a flaw to be sized may be identified to the candidate.”

Technical Basis - The current [ASME] Code requires that the regions of each specimen containing a flaw to be length sized shall be identified to the candidate. The candidate shall determine the length of the flaw in each region (note that length and depth sizing use the term “regions” while detection uses the term “grading units”). To ensure security of the samples, the proposed alternative modifies the first “shall” to a “may” to allow the test administrator the option of not identifying specifically where a flaw is located.

Items 9 and 10 - The proposed alternative to Paragraph 2.3(a) and 2.3(b) state:

“... regions of each specimen containing a flaw to be sized may be identified to the candidate.”

Technical Basis - The current [ASME] Code requires that a large number of flaws be sized at a specific location. The proposed alternative changes the “shall” to a “may” which modifies this from a specific area to a more generalized region to ensure security of samples.

Item 11 - The proposed alternative modifies the acceptance criteria of Table VIII-S2-1 as follows:

**TABLE VIII-S2-1
PERFORMANCE DEMONSTRATION DETECTION TEST
ACCEPTANCE CRITERIA**

Detection Test Acceptance Criteria		False Call Test Acceptance Criteria	
No. of Flawed Grading Units	Minimum Detection Criteria	No. of Unflawed Grading Units	Maximum Number of False Calls
5	5	10	0
6	6	12	1
7	6	14	1
8	7	16	2
9	7	18	2
10	8	20 15	3 2
11	9	22 17	3 3
12	9	24 18	3 3
13	10	26 20	4 3
14	10	28 21	5 3
15	11	30 23	5 3
16	12	32 24	6 4
17	12	34 26	6 4
18	13	36 27	7 4
19	13	38 29	7 4
20	14	40 30	8 5

Technical Basis - The proposed alternative adds new Table VIII-S10-1 above. It is a modified version of Table VIII-S2-1 to reflect the reduced number of unflawed grading units and allowable false calls. As provided by the PDI, as a part of ongoing [ASME] Code activities, Pacific Northwest National Laboratory has reviewed the statistical significance to this new Table VIII-S10-1.

3.4 NRC Staff's Evaluation

The licensees proposed to use the program developed by PDI that is similar to the ASME Code requirements. The differences between the ASME Code and the PDI program are discussed below.

3.4.1 Item 1 - Paragraph 1.1(b)

The ASME Code requirement of "0.9 to 1.5 times the nominal diameter are equivalent" was established for a single nominal diameter. When applying the ASME Code-required tolerance to a range of diameters, the tolerance rapidly expands on the high side. Under current code requirements, a 5-inch OD pipe (4.5 nominal pipe size (NPS)) would be equivalent to a range of 4.5-inch to 7.5-inch nominal pipe diameter. Under the proposed PDI guidelines, the equivalent range would be reduced to 4.5-inch to 5.5-inch nominal diameter. With current ASME Code requirements, a 16-inch nominal diameter pipe (16-inch NPS) would be equivalent to a range of 14.4-inch to 24-inch. The proposed PDI guidelines would significantly reduce the equivalent

range to 15.5-inch to 16.5-inch. The difference between the ASME Code and the proposed PDI program for diameters less than 5 inches is not significant because of a shorter metal path and beam spread associated with smaller diameter piping. The NRC staff considers the proposed alternative to be more conservative overall than current ASME Code requirements. The NRC staff finds that the proposed alternative will provide an acceptable level of quality and safety and, therefore, is acceptable.

3.4.2 Item 2 - Paragraph 1.1(d)

The ASME Code requires all flaws to be cracks. Manufacturing test specimens containing cracks free of spurious reflections and telltale indicators is extremely difficult in austenitic material. To overcome these difficulties, PDI developed a process for fabricating flaws that produce ultrasonic test (UT) acoustic responses similar to the responses associated with real cracks. PDI presented its process for discussion at public meetings held June 12 through 14, 2001, and January 31 through February 2, 2002, at the EPRI Nondestructive Examination Center, Charlotte, NC. The NRC staff attended these meetings and determined that the process parameters used for manufacturing fabricated flaws resulted in acceptable acoustic responses. PDI is selectively installing these fabricated flaws in specimen locations that are unsuitable for real cracks. The NRC staff finds that the proposed alternative will provide an acceptable level of quality and safety and, therefore, is acceptable.

3.4.3 Item 3 - Paragraph 1.1(d)(1)

The ASME code requires that at least 50% of the flaws be contained in austenitic material, and 50% of the flaws in the austenitic material shall be contained fully in weld or buttering material. This means that at least 25% of the total flaws must be located in the weld or buttering material. Field experience shows that flaws identified during ISI of dissimilar metal welds are more likely to be located in the weld or buttering material. The grain structure of austenitic weld and buttering material represents a much more stringent ultrasonic scenario than that of a ferritic material or austenitic base material. Flaws made in austenitic base material are difficult to create free of spurious reflectors and telltale indicators. The proposed alternative of 80% of the flaws in the weld metal or buttering material provides a challenging testing scenario reflective of field experience and minimizes testmanship associated with telltale reflectors common to placing flaws in austenitic base material. The NRC staff considers the proposed alternative to be more conservative than current ASME Code requirements. The NRC staff finds that the proposed alternative will provide an acceptable level of quality and safety and, therefore, is acceptable.

3.4.4 Item 4 - Paragraph 1.2(b) and Item 11 - Paragraph 3.1

The ASME Code requires that detection sets meet the requirements of Table VIII-S2-1 which specifies the minimum number of flaws in a test set to be 5 with 100% detection. The current ASME Code also requires the number of unflawed grading units to be two times the number of flawed grading units. The proposed alternative would follow the detection criteria of the table beginning with a minimum number of flaws in a test set being 10, and reducing the number of unflawed grading units to one and a half times the number of flawed grading units. The maximum number of allowable false calls is also reduced in order to maintain the statistical basis for the pass/fail criteria. The NRC staff has determined that the proposed alternative satisfies the pass/fail objective established for Appendix VIII performance demonstration. The

NRC staff finds that the proposed alternative will provide an acceptable level of quality and safety and, therefore, is acceptable.

3.4.5 Item 5 - Paragraphs 1.2(c)(1) and 1.3(c)

For detection and length sizing, the ASME Code requires at least one third of the flaws be located between 10 and 30% through the wall thickness and one third located greater than 30% through the wall thickness. The remaining flaws would be located randomly throughout the wall thickness. The proposed alternative sets the distribution criteria for detection and length sizing to be the same as the depth sizing distribution, which stipulates that at least 20% of the flaws be located in each of the increments of 10-30%, 31-60% and 61-100%. The remaining 40% would be located randomly throughout the pipe thickness. With the exception of the 10-30% increment, the proposed alternative is a subset of current ASME Code requirements. The 10-30% increment would be in the subset if it contained at least 30% of the flaws. The change simplifies assembling test sets for detection and sizing qualifications and is more indicative of conditions in the field. The NRC staff finds that the proposed alternative will provide an acceptable level of quality and safety and, therefore, is acceptable.

3.4.6 Item 6 - Paragraph 2.0

The ASME Code requires the specimen inside surface be concealed from the candidate. This requirement is applicable for test specimens used for qualifications performed from the outside surface. With the expansion of Supplement 10 to include qualifications performed from the inside surface, the inside surface must be accessible while maintaining the specimen integrity. The proposed alternative requires that flaws and specimen identifications be obscured from candidates, thus maintaining blind test conditions. The NRC staff considers this to be consistent with the intent of ASME Code requirements. The NRC staff finds that the proposed alternative will provide an acceptable level of quality and safety and, therefore, is acceptable.

3.4.7 Items 7 and 8 - Paragraphs 2.2(b) and 2.2(c)

The ASME Code requires that the location of flaws added to the test set for length sizing shall be identified to the candidate. The proposed alternative is to make identifying the location of additional flaws an option. This option provides an additional element of difficulty to the testing process because the candidate would be expected to demonstrate the skill of detecting and sizing flaws over an area larger than a specific location. The NRC staff considers the proposed alternative to be more conservative than current ASME Code requirements. The NRC staff finds that the proposed alternative will provide an acceptable level of quality and safety and, therefore, is acceptable.

3.4.8 Items 9 and 10 - Paragraphs 2.3(a) and 2.3(b)

In paragraph 2.3(a), the ASME Code requires that 80% of the flaws be sized in a specific location that is identified to the candidate. The proposed alternative allows identification of the specific location to be an option. This permits detection and depth sizing to be conducted separately or concurrently. In order to maintain a blind test, the location of flaws cannot be shared with the candidate. For depth sizing that is conducted separately, allowing the test administrator the option of not identifying flaw locations makes the testing process more challenging. The NRC staff considers the proposed alternative to be more conservative than

current ASME Code requirements. The NRC staff finds that the proposed alternative will provide an acceptable level of quality and safety and, therefore, is acceptable.

In paragraph 2.3(b), the ASME Code also requires that the location of flaws added to the test set for depth sizing shall be identified to the candidate. The proposed alternative is to make identifying the location of additional flaws an option. This option provides an additional element of difficulty to the testing process because the candidate would be expected to demonstrate the skill of finding and sizing flaws in an area larger than a specific location. The NRC staff considers the proposed alternative to be more conservative than ASME Code requirements. The NRC staff finds that the proposed alternative will provide an acceptable level of quality and safety and, therefore, is acceptable.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The NRC staff concludes that the licensees' proposed alternatives to Supplement 10, as administered by the EPRI-PDI Program, provide an acceptable level of quality and safety. Therefore, the use of the proposed alternatives as described in the licensees' letter dated March 26, 2003, is authorized for the remainder of the current 10-year ISI intervals for the plants in Table 1 pursuant to 10 CFR 50.55a(a)(3)(i).

All other ASME Code, Section XI, requirements for which relief has not been specifically requested remain applicable, including third party review by the Authorized Nuclear Inservice Inspector.

Principal Contributor: W. Held

Date: July 16, 2003