

December 7, 2004

Mr. Louis M. Quintana
GE Energy Manager, Licensing
General Electric Company
P.O. Box 780, M/C A-30
Wilmington, NC 28401

Dear Mr. Quintana:

Thank you for your letter of November 17, 2004, informing us of General Electric (GE) Energy's plan to submit an application for certification of the Economic and Simplified Boiling-Water Reactor (ESBWR) design in June 2005. Your letter also outlined GE Energy's plans for additional preapplication interactions with the staff during 2004 and 2005, including the planned submittal of licensing topical reports regarding the application of the TRACG code for ESBWR anticipated transients without scram (ATWS) and thermal-hydraulic stability. This information will help the staff to effectively plan and budget for these review efforts.

You requested that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) complete the design certification of the ESBWR in 30 months. In SECY-01-0188, "Future Licensing and Inspection Readiness Assessment [FLIRA]," dated October 12, 2001, we estimated a range of 42 to 60-month duration for design certification reviews, depending on the complexity and uniqueness of the design, what efforts have been completed during the pre-application phase, whether policy issues need to be addressed, the availability of NRC resources, and the priority assigned to the review. This estimate was based on our experience with previous design certifications, and assumes a 12-month duration for the design certification rulemaking. The AP1000 design certification rulemaking is scheduled to be completed in December 2005, concluding a 32-month design certification review. This relatively short review was possible due to the staff's experience gained from the AP600 design certification review.

Your letter described factors such as the review of the TRACG computer code for ESBWR during the preapplication phase that could result in a relatively short design certification review. The staff will consider these factors in developing a detailed schedule for the ESBWR design certification, which will be provided to you after receipt of a complete design certification application. This schedule will consider the quality of the application in addition to the factors discussed above. Schedule performance will be dependent, in part, on GE's ability to provide timely and complete information to support resolution of issues.

L. Quintana

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If you have any questions or comments concerning this matter, you may contact Ms. Amy Cabbage at (301) 415-2875 or aec@nrc.gov.

Sincerely,

/RA/

William D. Beckner, Program Director
New, Research and Test Reactors Program
Division of Regulatory Improvement Programs
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Project No. 717

cc: See next page

If you have any questions or comments concerning this matter, you may contact Ms. Amy Cubbage at (301) 415-2875 or aec@nrc.gov.

Sincerely,

/RA/

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ADAMS ACCESSION NUMBER: ML043370065-Package
ML043370085-Response
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ESBWR

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