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STP Nuclear Operating Company (STPNOC)
Comments on Proposed Risk-Informed Changes to
Loss-of-Coolant-Accident Technical Requirements
(RIN 3150-AH29, 70 FR 67598)

OFFICE OF SECRETARY
RULEMAKINGS AND
ADJUDICATIONS STAFF

STPNOC is pleased to provide comments on the proposed rule pertaining to risk-informed changes to the loss-of-coolant technical requirements published in the Federal Register November 7, 2005 (70 FR 67598). STPNOC has worked with the Westinghouse Owner's Group (WOG) and the Nuclear Energy Institute (NEI) in reviewing this proposed rulemaking. STPNOC endorses the specific rule change alternatives proposed by NEI and the bases for those alternatives. STPNOC believes changing the design-basis requirements for the large-break loss of coolant accident (LBLOCA) is an important part of establishing risk-informed, performance based regulations to position the industry and the NRC for the future and focus our resources on activities that are more significant to plant safety.

The comments below address general areas of the proposed rule that are of concern to STPNOC.

Because the design-basis LBLOCA has been found to have an insignificant contribution to risk, the nuclear industry sought this rule-making for the specific purpose of refocusing resources associated with the design and operational considerations for the LBLOCA to activities that are more beneficial to the plants. In its present form, the proposed rule change would substantially increase the burden for any licensee who adopts it and would not achieve the desired goal. STPNOC has followed the rule change with interest and would consider adopting the proposed optional 10CFR50.46a if it would effectively facilitate improvements being planned for STP. However, because of the increase in burden, STPNOC would not adopt the proposed change in its present form.

The proposed requirement to perform a risk assessment of all changes, regardless of safety or risk significance, creates a situation for the licensee that is both unnecessary and potentially adverse to safety. By requiring evaluation of changes beyond even the criteria established in 10CFR50.59, the rule will effectively supersede 10CFR50.59 and add a wide range of activities and components to the licensing basis that were never reviewed by the NRC or intended to be reviewed by the NRC. The quantitative risk thresholds proposed in the Statement of Consideration (SOC) for the review required by the rule will by their very nature inordinately focus licensee resources on non-risk-significant components and activities. The work associated with performing and documenting this additional review will force licensees to assign valuable

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resources to tracking a multitude of items that have no safety or risk significance. This requirement is not commensurate with the risk significance of the proposed rule change and appears to be contrary to the direction of the Commission.

The applicability and screening process approved for the 10CFR50.59 process has proven to be an effective process which enhances safety by focusing licensee resources and attention on those things that are important to plant safety. STPNOC agrees with the NEI recommendation to eliminate the change control process proposed in the rule and replace it with a more reasonable and useful process to monitor overall changes in risk.

STPNOC also agrees with the NEI suggestion to eliminate the operational restriction from the proposed rule. As written, the proposed restriction could preclude a licensee from performing on-line maintenance on the ECCS. The improvement in the ECCS reliability and availability from timely on-line maintenance would be expected to offset the small risk associated with the allowed outage time needed to perform the maintenance. Consequently, the effect of the operational restriction is likely to be an increase in risk.

STPNOC believes the NEI comments include a number of reasonable and effective alternatives to the requirements in the proposed rule and its associated SOC that STPNOC believes would result in a successful rule that positions the nuclear industry and the NRC for the future.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (361) 972-7206 or Wayne Harrison at (361) 972-7298.



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Subject: STP Nuclear Operating Company Comments on Risk-Informed Changes to Loss-of-Coolant-Accident Technical Requirements (RIN 3150-AH29)

STPNOC is pleased to submit the attached comments on Risk-Informed Changes to Loss-of-Coolant-Accident Technical Requirements (RIN 3150-AH29). If you have any questions on this message or attachment, please contact me.

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