

**Script read by Timothy Lupold, Chief of the Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation's Piping and Nondestructive Examination Branch on December 5, 2010, to the staff of the Duane Arnold Energy Center (DAEC).**

By letter dated December 4, 2010, as supplemented by email dated December 5, 2010, NextEra Energy Duane Arnold, LLC (the licensee) requested relief to the requirements of the 1998 Edition of ASME Section XI, Paragraph IWA-4540(c). This Paragraph requires that a system leakage test and VT-2 examination be performed to verify leak tightness of the mechanical joints. Normal operating pressure for the Duane Arnold Energy Center is approximately 1025 [psig]. The licensee has requested an alternative to the requirements to conduct the leak test at a test pressure of approximately 940 psig.

In addition, the licensee committed:

If there is an unplanned shutdown with a drywell entry before the next refueling outage (currently scheduled to begin in October 2012), another inspection of this mechanical joint will be performed at a minimum pressure of 940 psig to look for any evidence of leakage.

The licensee has requested relief to the requirements under 10 CFR 50.55a(a)(3)(ii), stating that completing the test at 1025 psig would constitute undue hardship without a compensating increase in the level of quality and safety.

The hardship would consist of either increased radiation doses to the workers to complete the test at normal operating pressure; a delay in the restart of the unit by as much as two days, or significant revision to the procedure and the operational approach to achieve a pressure of 1025 without the benefit of nuclear heat.

The need for the test was promulgated by the replacement of the pilot valve for Main Steam Safety relief valve PSV 4402. 10 CFR 50.55a(a)(b)(2)(xxvi) requires that repair and replacement activity provisions in IWA-4540(c) of the 1998 Edition of Section XI for pressure testing Class 1, 2, and 3 mechanical joints be applied when using the 2001 Edition through the latest edition and addenda incorporated by reference in paragraph (b)(2) of 10CFR50.55a. The code of record for the Duane Arnold Energy Center for the 4<sup>th</sup> ten year inservice inspection interval is the 2001 Edition through the 2003 Addenda of the ASME Section XI Code. As stated above, this requires the test to be conducted at normal operating pressure, which the licensee has stated constitutes a hardship without a compensating increase in the level of quality and safety.

The NRC has completed its review of the information provided in the licensee's submittals. The NRC has concluded that the licensee provided adequate information regarding the hardship in completing the pressure test at normal operating pressure. Hence, as Chief of the Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation's Piping & NDE Branch, I hereby verbally recommend authorization of the licensee's implementation of the proposed alternative for the pressure testing of the replaced pilot valve for Main Stream Safety relief valve PSV 4402 during restart activities in accordance with the information provided in the licensee's letter dated December 4, 2010 and supplemented on December 5, 2010.

All other ASME Code, Section XI requirements for which relief was not specifically requested and approved in this relief request remain applicable, including third party review by the Authorized Nuclear Inservice Inspector.

**Script read by Robert Pascarelli, Chief of the Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation's Plant Licensing Branch 3-1 during the same conference call to Duane Arnold Energy Center**

As Chief of the Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation's Plant Licensing Branch III-1, I concur with the Piping and Nondestructive Examination Branch's conclusions. Based on these conclusions, I conclude that the alternative proposed in the licensee's letter dated December 4, 2010, as supplemented by email dated December 5, 2010, will provide an acceptable level of quality and safety. Therefore, the licensee's proposed alternative is authorized pursuant to 10 CFR 50.55a(a)(3)(ii). We expect to follow up formally in writing in the near future.

**Conference call details:**

The conference call started December 5, 2010 at 5:45 PM (unmuting) and concluded at approximately 6:00 PM

Attending for NRC were:

- Karl Feintuch, Project Manager
- Timothy Lupold, Branch Chief, Piping and NDE Branch
- Robert Pascarelli, Branch Chief, Plant Licensing Branch 3-1
- Adam Wilson, Senior Resident Inspector at Duane Arnold Energy Center

Attending for Duane Arnold Energy Center were:

- Steve Catron, Licensing Manager
- Chris Costanzo, Site Vice President
- Ken Kleinheinz, Engineering Director
- Glen Pry, Operations Manager
- Robert Porter, Radiation Protection Manager
- Tim Erger, Asst Operations Manager