



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

July 17, 2012

Mr. Leopoldo L. Lopez
7414 Arizona Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90045

Dear Mr. Lopez:

On behalf of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), I am responding to your letter to Chairman Gregory B. Jaczko, dated May 26, 2012, in which you conveyed concerns about the safety of the San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station (SONGS).

As you noted in your letter, SONGS, Units 2 and 3, are currently shut down due to excessive steam generator tube wear. On March 15, 2012, the NRC sent an augmented inspection team (AIT) to the site in response to the January 31, 2012, steam generator tube leak in Unit 3 and the subsequent discovery of significant tube-to-tube wear on both of the Unit 3 steam generators and significantly less tube-to-tube wear on one of the two Unit 2 steam generators. For several months, this team of NRC inspectors, with assistance from other NRC experts, has been closely following the licensee's actions to evaluate the causes of the excessive tube wear and to develop corrective actions to prevent further tube degradation. On June 18, 2012, NRC personnel met with representatives of Southern California Edison (SCE) in San Juan Capistrano, California, to present the NRC's issues and observations resulting from the AIT inspection. As discussed in that meeting, the NRC understands the steam generator thermal hydraulic conditions that resulted in the tube degradation; that these conditions were not accurately predicted during design; and that the licensee is evaluating and developing additional actions to fix and prevent any additional tube-to-tube degradation due to excessive vibration.

On March 27, 2012, the NRC issued a Confirmatory Action Letter (CAL) to SCE, identifying the specific actions the licensee has committed to take prior to returning the units to power operation. The CAL can be viewed on the NRC Web site, <http://www.nrc.gov>, in the Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS), at Accession No. ML12087A323. Under the terms of the CAL, each unit will remain shut down until the licensee provides its written evaluations and responses to all of the CAL items for that unit. The NRC will perform additional related inspections and reviews of that information. The NRC will not allow the plant to restart if we are not satisfied it can be operated without undue risk to public health and safety. The NRC will take as much time as needed in determining the appropriate actions to ensure the safety of the public, and will communicate its determinations to SCE regarding the restart of SONGS, Units 2 and 3, in writing.

The NRC actively reviews safety complaints at all licensed nuclear facilities as part of the agency's rigorous Reactor Oversight Process, as described by Mr. Elmo Collins in his letter to you dated March 20, 2012 (ADAMS Accession No. ML12199A071). The NRC employs numerous tools to monitor and evaluate licensee performance. The NRC communicates its assessment of plant performance in letters to licensees, which typically are issued semi-annually. The most recent NRC annual assessment letter for SONGS, for calendar year 2011, was issued on March 5, 2012, and can be found in ADAMS at Accession No. ML120610641.

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Thank you for conveying your concerns about these matters.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Douglas A. Broaddus". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and a stylized "B".

Douglas A. Broaddus, Chief
San Onofre Special Projects Branch
Division of Operating Reactor Licensing
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket Nos. 50-361 and 50-362

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Thank you for conveying your concerns about these matters.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Douglas A. Broaddus, Chief
San Onofre Special Projects Branch
Division of Operating Reactor Licensing
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket Nos. 50-361 and 50-362

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ADAMS Accession Nos.: Pkg ML12188A122 Incoming ML12172A302; Response ML12188A143

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