

OCT 15 1975

Carolina Power & Light Company
ATTN: Mr. J. A. Jones
Senior Vice President
336 Fayetteville Street
Raleigh, North Carolina 27602

Gentlemen:

RE: H. B. Robinson

The purpose of this letter is to inform you of a potential safety question which has been raised regarding the design of reactor pressure vessel support systems for pressurized water reactors (PWR's).

On May 7, 1975 the NRC was informed by a licensee that certain transient loads on the reactor vessel support members that would result from a postulated reactor coolant pipe rupture immediately adjacent to the reactor vessel had been underestimated in their original design analyses.

It is the NRC staff's opinion that the question related to the treatment of transient loads in the design of reactor vessel support systems may apply to other PWR facilities, especially those for which the design analyses were performed some time ago. We have therefore initiated a systematic review of this matter to determine how these loads were taken into account on other PWR facilities, and what, if any, corrective measures may be required for specific facilities.

The results of licensee studies reported to date indicate that, although the margins of safety may be less than originally intended, the reactor vessel support system would retain sufficient structural integrity to support the vessel and that the ultimate consequences of this postulated accident which could affect the general public are no worse than originally stated. We have not completed our independent evaluation of these studies. However, based on the results of our evaluation of this phenomenon to date and in recognition of the low probability of the particular pipe rupture which could lead to additional transient loads on the support systems, we conclude that continued reactor operation and continued licensing of facilities for operation are acceptable while we conduct our generic review.

PR We request that you review the design bases for the reactor vessel support system for your facility to determine whether the transient loads described in the enclosure were taken into account appropriately in the

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design. Please inform us of the results of your review within 30 days.

The attachments to the enclosure are provided to indicate the information that could be needed, should we determine, on the basis of your review, that a reassessment of the vessel support design is required.

We are continuing to evaluate and review the methodology for calculating the subcooled blowdown loads with the nuclear steam system suppliers. You should contact your nuclear steam system supplier for information regarding these calculations if necessary to complete your review.

This request for generic information was approved by GAO under a blanket clearance number B-180225 (R0072). This clearance expires July 31, 1977.

Sincerely,

15/ R.W.Reid

Robert W. Reid, Chief
Operating Reactors Branch #4
Division of Reactor Licensing

Enclosure:
Statement of the Problem

cc w/enclosure:
See next page

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Carolina Power & Light Company

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cc:

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