

TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY

CHATTANOOGA, TENNESSEE 37401

400 Chestnut Street Tower II

October 1, 1979

Director of Nuclear Reactor Regulation
Attention: Mr. L. S. Rubenstein, Acting Chief
Light Water Reactors Branch No. 4
Division of Project Management
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, DC 20555

Dear Mr. Rubenstein:

In the Matter of the Application of) Docket Nos. 50-327
Tennessee Valley Authority) 50-328

We have received your September 14, 1979, letter to H. G. Parris requesting information on possible guide thimble tube wear in Westinghouse fuel assemblies. Subsequent communication with Westinghouse has disclosed the following information.

In December 1977, during a core refueling outage at a non-Westinghouse plant, cracks and wall penetrations were discovered in the control rod guide thimble tubes of the fuel assemblies (1). See Enclosure for references. Corrective actions, including increased operability surveillance, step insertion of control rods, and extensive sleeving of both new and irradiated guide tubes, were taken at all affected facilities (2).

Shortly thereafter, the NRC requested that other fuel vendors, including Westinghouse, provide evidence for the absence of guide thimble wear in their fuel assemblies (2). Westinghouse responded to this request, providing analyses and supportive post-irradiation examination data, showing that adequate margins for fuel integrity exist in the Westinghouse design and that fuel assembly guide thimble wear is not a safety concern (3, 4, 5).

It is our understanding that this issue is being handled generically and that Westinghouse plans to meet with the NRC in early October to answer these questions. Presently, TVA does not believe that these questions require a docket specific response. Any additional information which applies specifically to Sequoyah Nuclear Plant will be provided after the NRC-Westinghouse meeting.

Very truly yours,

TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY

L. M. Mills

L. M. Mills, Manager
Nuclear Regulation and Safety

Enclosure

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ENCLOSURE

REFERENCES

- (1) ACRS, 216th General Meeting, Washington, D.C., Friday, April 7, 1978, page 391.
- (2) Letter from D. G. Eisenhut, NRC, to T. M. Anderson, Westinghouse, June 12, 1978.
- (3) Letter from T. M. Anderson, Westinghouse, to D. G. Eisenhut, NRC, NS-TMA-1936, September 12, 1978.
- (4) Letter from T. M. Anderson, Westinghouse, to D. G. Eisenhut, NRC, NS-TMA-1992, December 15, 1978.
- (5) Letter from T. M. Anderson, Westinghouse, to D. G. Eisenhut, NRC, NS-TMA-2102, June 27, 1979.