



DUKE POWER

April 6, 1993

U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Attention: Document Control Desk
Washington, D. C. 20555

Subject: McGuire Nuclear Station, Unit 1
Docket Number 50-369
Deferral of Planned Post-Irradiation Examinations for
Test Assemblies

The purpose of this letter is to notify the NRC of recent developments which affect Duke Power Company's plans to perform post-irradiation examinations (PIEs) on two advanced cladding assemblies during the McGuire Unit 1 end of cycle (EOC) 8 outage. The two assemblies were initially deployed for operation in Cycle 8, and the purpose of the PIEs was to obtain first cycle data on the operational characteristics of the assemblies. Duke's intent to perform the PIEs is outlined in the Technical Specification change application. (Reference: Letter from M. S. Tuckman (Duke) to U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Technical Specification Change to Allow Use of Demonstration Assemblies, April 18, 1991.) This change was approved on October 31, 1991, as Amendment #127 to McGuire Unit 1's Facility Operating License.

During offload of fuel assemblies from the reactor core at EOC 8, a substantial amount of debris was detected in the reactor. Upon visual inspection of the fuel, a significant amount of debris was also identified in the offloaded fuel assemblies. B&W Fuel Company (BWFC) has been contracted to remove debris from the off-loaded fuel in the spent fuel pool.

Duke currently intends to perform the fuel assembly debris removal and previously-scheduled Rod Control Cluster Assembly (RCCA) examinations prior to Cycle 9 startup. The length of this work may threaten EOC 8 critical path and interfere with the previously planned PIEs. Both the debris removal and RCCA exams have been assigned a higher priority than the advanced cladding PIE work due to their possible impact on future plant operations. Duke does not consider the EOC 8 PIEs to be as high a priority because cladding oxidation is minor over the first cycle of operation. Also, PIEs for the advanced cladding assemblies will be performed during the EOC 9 and 10 outages. These later cycle examinations are considered more important since oxidation will be in a range of greater interest.

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Duke does, however, plan to perform visual examinations of the two advanced cladding assemblies during EOC 8. Should time permit, the PIEs will be performed prior to fuel onload. However, the portable PIE rig inspections may be omitted during EOC 8 should the time associated with the debris removal and RCCA examinations extend to the fuel onload date (currently scheduled for May 4).

Should you have questions or need additional information, please call Scott Gewehr at (704) 382-7581, or Kenny Church at (704) 382-6783.

Very truly yours,


Hal B. Tucker

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