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

Dear Sir:

Subject: Oyster Creek Nuclear Generating Station
Docket No. 50-219
Response to NRC Bulletin 96-02, "Movement of Heavy Loads Over Spent
Fuel, Over Fuel in the Reactor Core or Over Safety-Related Equipment"

In accordance with 10 CFR 50.4(f), enclosed is GPU Nuclear's response to NRC Bulletin 96-02 for the Oyster Creek Nuclear Generating Station. A response to the bulletin was required within 30 days, however GPU Nuclear was granted a 30 day extension. GPU NUCLEAR has reviewed the bulletin and has responded to each of the requested actions. Oyster Creek is planning to move heavy loads while the reactor is at power (in all modes other than cold shutdown, refueling, defueled). With regard to the transfer of spent fuel to dry fuel storage, GPU Nuclear is evaluating a number of options which may include transfer at power.

Heavy load activities not previously evaluated will be reviewed in accordance with provisions of 10 CFR 50.59. For heavy load activities that constitute an Unreviewed Safety Question as defined by 10 CFR 50.59, or require a change to the Technical Specifications, a license amendment request will be prepared and submitted for approval.

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If you have any questions related to the above or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact Joseph F. Andrescavage of Regulatory Affairs at 609 971 4862.

Very truly yours,



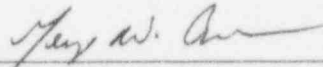
Michael B. Roche
Vice President & Director
Oyster Creek

MBR/JFA/

Attachment

cc: Administrator, Region 1
NRC Project Manager
NRC Resident Inspector

Sworn and Subscribed to before me this 11 day of June, 1996.



A Notary Public of New Jersey

GEORGE W. BUSCH
NOTARY PUBLIC OF NEW JERSEY
My Commission Expires Aug. 8, 2000

ATTACHMENT

GENERAL PUBLIC UTILITIES NUCLEAR CORPORATION OYSTER CREEK NUCLEAR GENERATING STATION

RESPONSE TO NRC BULLETIN 96-02

On April 11, 1996, the NRC issued NRC Bulletin No. 96-02, Movement of Heavy Loads Over Spent Fuel, Over Fuel in the Reactor Core, or Over Safety Related Equipment, to alert licensees for nuclear power reactors to the importance of complying with existing regulatory guidelines associated with the control and handling of heavy loads at nuclear power plants while the plant is operating (in all modes other than cold shutdown, refueling and defueled). The Bulletin noted that some licensees have moved or are planning to move heavy loads, such as spent fuel shipping casks, transfer casks, and reactor cavity biological shield blocks during plant operations, and if these loads experience uncontrolled movement or are dropped on safety related equipment, the impacted equipment may be unable to perform its function. A specific example noted in the Bulletin involved Oyster Creek's planned movement of spent fuel in dry storage casks weighing approximately 100 tons. Based on interaction with the NRC, it was agreed that GPU Nuclear would submit a license amendment should it be decided to move spent fuel to dry storage while at power.

NRC Bulletin 96-02 requires that all holders of operating licenses for nuclear power reactors review plans and capabilities for handling heavy loads while the reactor is at power in accordance with existing regulatory guidelines and determine whether the activities are within the licensing basis. If necessary, a license amendment request should be submitted. The Bulletin also requests that licensees determine whether changes to Technical Specifications (TS) will be required in order to allow the handling of heavy loads (e.g. the dry storage canister shield plug and associated lifting devices) over spent fuel.

The Bulletin requires that all licensees of nuclear power reactors provide a written response. The following is GPU Nuclear's response for Oyster Creek Nuclear Generating Station.

Requested Action #1

For licensees planning to implement activities involving the handling of heavy loads over spent fuel, fuel in the reactor core, or safety related equipment within the next 2 years from the date of this Bulletin, provide the following:

- A report, within 30 days of the date of NRC Bulletin 96-02, that addresses the licensee's review of its plans and capabilities to handle heavy loads while the reactor is at power (in all modes other than cold shutdown, refueling, defueled) in accordance with existing regulatory guidelines. The report should include, if necessary, a schedule for submission of a license amendment request. Additionally, the report should indicate whether changes to Technical Specifications will be required.

Response to Action #1

The Oyster Creek licensing basis requires compliance with NRC Nureg 0612 phase I. These requirements consist of establishing load handling procedures and safe load paths, crane considerations (design, inspection, testing and maintenance), lifting device controls (design, inspection and testing) and crane operator training. GPU Nuclear's commitments to these requirements are contained in GPU Nuclear's letters dated September 22, 1981 and February 18, 1983, and were accepted by the NRC in their letter dated June 21, 1983. Specific requirements are incorporated in Oyster Creek procedures pertaining to plant activities requiring lifting of heavy loads.

GPU Nuclear continues to improve the capabilities for handling heavy loads in the reactor and turbine buildings and throughout the site. Most recently, the reactor building crane was upgraded to reduce the probability of a load drop and to enhance the crane operator's ability to handle heavy loads safely.

In addition, GPU Nuclear has reviewed plans for handling of heavy loads over spent fuel, fuel in the reactor core or safety related equipment within the next two (2) years from the date of this bulletin and has concluded that a license amendment is required to allow movement of heavy loads during power operation with the reactor building crane for weights up to 25 tons. GPU Nuclear plans to make this submittal by July, 1996.

For all heavy loads not previously analyzed, and for loads greater than 25 tons, using the Reactor Building Crane during power operation, an evaluation is required to determine the potential consequences of a load drop. When an evaluation results in a loss of safety function, a 10 CFR 50.59 review will be conducted. Should the review identify an unreviewed safety question, a license amendment will be submitted in accordance with 10 CFR 50.90.

Requested Action #2

For licensees planning to perform activities involving the handling of heavy loads over spent fuel, fuel in the reactor core, or safety related equipment while the reactor is at power (in all modes other than cold shutdown, refueling, and defueled) and that involve a potential load drop accident that has not previously been evaluated in the FSAR, submit a license amendment request in advance (6-9 months) of the planned movement of the loads so as to afford the staff sufficient time to perform an appropriate review.

Response to Requested Action #2

As stated in response to Requested Action #1, GPU Nuclear has reviewed plans and capabilities to handle heavy loads while the reactor is at power and has determined that a license amendment is required to handle heavy loads of greater than 800 lbs. to a limit of 25 tons using the reactor building crane. The loads at issue are those with drop consequences that could impact safety related equipment. Where a load drop evaluation shows no loss of safety function a license amendment request is not required. As indicated above, GPU Nuclear will continue to evaluate, on a case by case basis, any heavy load lifts that are made during power operations at Oyster Creek Nuclear Generating Station and if necessary, submit the appropriate license amendment request.

Requested Action #3

For licensees planning to move dry storage casks over spent fuel, fuel in the reactor core, or safety-related equipment while the reactor is at power (in all modes other than cold shutdown, refueling, and defueled) include in Item 2 above, a statement of the capability of performing the actions necessary for safe shutdown in the presence of radiological source term that may result from a breach of the dry storage cask, damage to the fuel, and damage to safety-related equipment as a result of a load drop inside the facility.

Response To Action #3

As mentioned in the NRC Bulletin 96-02, GPU Nuclear is planning to move spent fuel into dry storage at Oyster Creek Nuclear Generating Station within the next two years. The Corporation is currently reviewing several options for the transfer of spent fuel including movement at power.

Whichever option GPU Nuclear elects to use for the transfer of spent fuel to dry fuel storage, an analysis will be performed and will consider the capability to perform the actions necessary to achieve safe shutdown as discussed in the above requested action.

Requested Action #4

For licensees planning to perform activities involving the handling of heavy loads over spent fuel, fuel in the reactor core, or safety-related equipment while the reactor is at power (in all modes other than cold shutdown, refueling, and defueled), determine whether changes to Technical Specifications will be required in order to allow the handling of heavy loads (e.g., the dry storage canister shield plug) over fuel assemblies in the spent fuel pool and submit the appropriate information in advance (6-9 months) of the planned movement of the loads for NRC review and approval

Response to Action #4

GPU Nuclear has reviewed planned activities associated with the handling of heavy loads as described in Requested Action #2 above for Oyster Creek Nuclear Generating Station and submitted Technical Specification Change Request No. 244 on April 15, 1996, for transferring the dry storage canister shield plug over irradiated fuel.