

50-344



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20565

December 17, 1992

Mr. Jerry Wilson
Soloflex, Inc.
570 N.E. 53rd
Hillsboro, Oregon 97124

Dear Mr. Wilson:

I am responding to your letter of November 24, 1992, to the Commissioners of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). In your letter you requested "a public hearing" prior to the restart of Trojan Nuclear Plant and expressed concerns about the status of its steam generators.

As you may know, the staff held a meeting at the Trojan site in Rainier, Oregon, on December 1, 1992, to discuss the cause and repair of the steam generator primary-to-secondary tube leak that occurred on November 9, 1992. This meeting was held to provide an opportunity for Portland General Electric (PGE) to inform the NRC staff on the issues raised in the Confirmatory Action Letter, dated November 13, 1992. The meeting was attended by NRC headquarters personnel, NRC Region V personnel, PGE, and members of the media and general public. The meeting also included a discussion of the proposed emergency technical specification change that was prepared by the licensee.

The licensee recently withdrew its request for the emergency technical specification change and is conducting augmented steam generator tube inspections. It is our understanding that the licensee is evaluating the steam generator tube inspection data and they are considering a range of possible actions that depend on the results of the data evaluation. The NRC staff is following the inspection process and any subsequent request for technical specification amendment closely.

As a result of this information and the interest that you have expressed, I have directed my staff to put you on the service list for the Trojan Nuclear Plant. As such, you will receive all outgoing correspondence related to Trojan. Additionally, I have directed my staff to inform you by telephone if any technical specification amendment request is submitted by the licensee on the current steam generator issue so that you may be aware of the current status of the issue and your rights to request a hearing with respect to any requested license amendment. This should enable you to file a timely application for a formal hearing on any requested amendment.

I would advise you to consult Title 10, Code of Federal Regulations (10 CFR), for an understanding of your rights and responsibilities regarding a hearing request; specifically, refer to 10 CFR 50.91, and 10 CFR 2.714. In general, you may file a petition for leave to intervene and request a hearing during the notice period on any licensing action proposed by the licensee, or you may make any public comment on the no significant hazards determination without requesting a hearing and filing a petition for leave to intervene.

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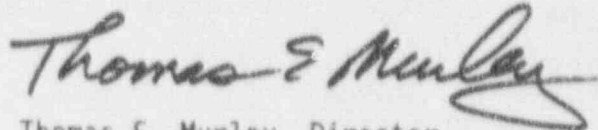
Mr. Jerry Wilson

- 2 -

Finally, you may petition the staff pursuant to 10 CFR 2.206 to modify, suspend, or revoke a license, provided you specify the action requested and set forth the facts that constitute the basis for the request. However, a petition pursuant to 10 CFR 2.206 is not a request for a hearing.

The staff welcomes informed participation in the licensing process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Thomas E. Murley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent loop at the end of the last name.

Thomas E. Murley, Director
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Mr. Jerry Wilson

- 2 -

December 17, 1992

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The staff welcomes informed participation in the licensing process.

Sincerely,

Original signed by
Thomas E. Murley

Thomas E. Murley, Director
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

DISTRIBUTION:

Docket File (50-344 w/incoming)

EDO# 8342

J. Taylor

J. Martin, RV

T. Murley/F. Miraglia

J. Roe

W. Russell

PDV Reading File (w/incoming)

T. Quay

L. Kokajko

OGC (15B18)

SECY (92-0991)

T. Gibbons

B. Clayton

NRC & Local PDRs (w/incoming)

PDV Action File

J. Snizek

K. Knubel

J. Partlow

M. Virgilio

F. Gillespie

D. Crutchfield

OCA

D. Foster

OPA (2G5)

NRR Mail Room (EDO# 8342 w/incoming)

C. Hawes

K. Perkins, RV

*See Previous Concurrence

OFC	PDV/LA	PDV/PM	PDV/D	TECH ED*	OGC*
NAME	DFoster	LKokajko	TQuay	MMejac	RMB
DATE	12/17/92	12/17/92	12/17/92	12/07/92	12/14/92

OFC	AD45/DRPW*	D/DRPW*	ADP/NRR*	DD/NRR*	D/NRR
NAME	MVirgilio	JRoe	JPartlow	FMiraglia	TMurley
DATE	12/14/92	12/15/92	12/15/92	12/15/92	12/17/92

OFFICIAL RECORD COPY

DOCUMENT NAME: GT8342

NRC FILE CENTER COPY



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

ACTION

EDO Principal Correspondence Control

FROM:

DUE: 12/09/92

EDO CONTROL: 0008342

DOC DT: 11/24/92

FINAL REPLY:

Jerry Wilson
Soloflex, Inc.

TO:

Chairman Selin

FOR SIGNATURE OF:

** GRN **

CRC NO: 92-0991

Murley

DESC:

ROUTING:

REQUEST FOR MEETING BEFORE RESTART OF TROJAN

Taylor
Sniezek
Knubel
JMartin, RV

DATE: 11/30/92

ASSIGNED TO:

CONTACT:

NRR

Murley

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS OR REMARKS:

NRR Rec'd 12/1/92

NRR Action DRPW/Roe

NRR Routing Murley

Murphy

Russell

Patlow

Gillespie

Crutchfield

Mail Room

12618

ACTION	
DUE TO NRR DIRECTOR'S OFFICE	
12/07/92	
BY	_____

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
CORRESPONDENCE CONTROL TICKET

PAPER NUMBER: CRC-92-0991 LOGGING DATE: Nov 25 92
ACTION OFFICE: EDO *alt* EDO
AUTHOR: Jerry Wilson
AFFILIATION: OR (OREGON)
ADDRESSEE: Chairman Selin
LETTER DATE: Nov 24 92 FILE CODE:
SUBJECT: Request for public hearing before restart
concerning steam generator problems at Trojan
ACTION: Direct Reply
DISTRIBUTION: Chrm., Comrs., OGC, DSB, RF
SPECIAL HANDLING: None
CONSTITUENT:
NOTES:
DATE DUE: Dec 9 92
SIGNATURE: . DATE SIGNED:
AFFILIATION:

EDO --- 008342

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SOLOFLEX
MUSCLE-MACHINES

November 24, 1992

Ivan Selin, Chairman
United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D.C. 20555

Dear Chairman Selin,

Along with the facsimile transmission of this letter (which is being followed up by a "hard copy" mailing) is a fax of a newspaper story from today's edition of The Oregonian newspaper. The story reveals that an internal NRC document has warned against greatly increased dangers of a core meltdown at the Trojan nuclear reactor in Oregon, as a result of that plant's current problems with degraded steam generator tubes.

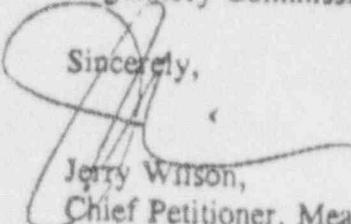
I am sure that you and the other NRC commissioners are aware of Trojan's problems, since your organization relaxed its rules to allow the plant to continue operating with an above-standards percentage of its steam generator tubes in disrepair. I believe that the waiver of the rules is up for review in March of 1993. The internal NRC document alluded to in the Oregonian reflects some of your own staff's objections to that waiver of rules.

We at the Do It Yourself Committee have been tracking the situation at Trojan for several years. This year, we were the chief sponsors of ballot Measure 6 to close the Trojan plant by voter initiative. Earlier this month, our measure received hundreds of thousands of votes, and was endorsed by the largest environmental groups in Oregon and many politicians and business people.

In light of the serious steam generator problems at Trojan and the alarming dissenting opinions within the NRC as to the safety of the plant, we ask that a public hearing be held in Portland, Oregon -- attended by NRC staff from Washington, D.C. -- before you make any decisions that would allow Trojan to restart. Such public meetings were granted for citizens concerned about the Yankee Rowe nuclear reactor last year. We would like similar public hearings, so the people of Oregon can discuss vital Trojan safety issues with NRC staff.

Please share our request with your fellow commissioners Rogers, Curtiss, Remick and de Planque and have someone from NRC staff get back to us about our request. Currently, the operators of Trojan, Portland General Electric Company, hope to restart the plant within the next two weeks. We are requesting a public meeting as early as next week, before the plant is reopened. This is a matter of grave concern to thousands of Oregonians, as it is to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Sincerely,


Jerry Wilson,
Chief Petitioner, Measure 6

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 1992

NRC dissent challenges rules waiver given Trojan

By JAMES LONG
of The Oregonian staff

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission's relaxation of rules on flawed steam tubes at Westinghouse-designed nuclear power plants such as Trojan greatly increases the risk of a reactor core meltdown, an internal NRC document says.

Such an occurrence would be catastrophic, releasing radioactive materials to the environment, the report said.

The Union of Concerned Scientists, a Washington, D.C., public interest group, obtained the document and released it Monday.

"Trojan has been plagued with (tube cracks) for 10 years," said Robert D. Pollard, a former NRC nuclear engineer now with the Union of Concerned Scientists. "NRC's response has been to keep relaxing the rules. Now it's gone so far that even the NRC staff is objecting."

Without naming Trojan specifically, the document said a waiver that NRC granted last February to allow Trojan to continue operating despite numerous flawed tubes in its steam generators had increased the chance of a serious accident from 1 per million per year — or virtually no chance — to a plausible 1 in 3,000.

Nationally, there are 52 pressurized-water reactors similar to Trojan, or about half of all the nation's nuclear plants.

But Pollard said it was the waiver for Trojan that had touched off the internal NRC fight about steam tubes.

The NRC decided to let Trojan operate despite microscopic defects discovered in 428 of about 13,000 heat-exchange tubes connecting the reactor with four steam generators.

According to the papers that Pollard obtained, at least three unidentified NRC staff members disagreed with the waiver and filed a formal dissent within the agency known as a "Differing Professional Opinion."

One of the staff members argued that "a main steam line break outside containment could trigger multiple steam generator tube failures which would then result in core melt because of depletion of coolant."

An NRC review of the dissent — the document that Pollard passed along to the media — did not find the scenario farfetched.

C.J. Heltames Jr., deputy director of the Office of Nuclear Regulatory Research, passed the report directly to Frank P. Gillespie, director of program management for the Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation.

"The preliminary priority ranking is High," Heltames said in a covering memo to Gillespie.

Pollard said it was unusual for the head of NRC's research office to pass such a document directly to the chief regulator.

Gregory N. Cook, an NRC regional spokesman in San Francisco, said, however, that the agency considered Trojan safe and that the "Difference of Professional Opinion" document contained no information to change that stance.

Cook said the NRC's waivers for Trojan were tailor-made for the plant and were granted only after meticulous study of the exact flaws in individual tubes and how they were to be fixed.

Still, he said, the NRC would follow up carefully on the dissent and take any action deemed necessary.

David W. Heintzman, a PGE spokesman, said the utility also considered Trojan safe. "If we didn't," he said, "we wouldn't operate it."

Trojan and similar plants generate electricity by heating water to more than 600 degrees Fahrenheit in their nuclear reactor cores, pumping it under intense pressure through stainless-steel tubes that loop out of the core like oven elements.

Trojan has 13,552 such tubes that protrude into four separate chambers, where they cause other water to flash to steam and spin generators to make electricity.

Because the reactor-core water is radioactively contaminated, a prime concern of plant operators and the NRC is making sure the water is kept sealed in the tubes. This is why, Pollard said, the dissenting NRC staff members protested the waivers allowing Trojan and other plants to have tubes with flaws reaching more than 40 percent of the way through the steel.

"The safety systems . . . are only designed to prevent a meltdown of the reactor core if only one tube in one steam generator ruptures," Pollard said. "If the plant is running with cracked and weakened generator tubes, a break in the main steam pipe could cause several of the weakened tubes to rupture. If as few as 10 tubes rupture, radioactive water will be discharged directly into the environment. Moreover, the coolant water of the emergency core cooling system will escape the reactor containment through the broken tubes and will not be cycled back . . . to continue cooling the fuel core."

Trojan has been shut down since Nov. 9 because of a botched effort to weld a tube crack.