

50-440



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

January 22, 1997

Mr. Lew W. Myers
Vice President Nuclear - Perry
Centerior Service Company
P. O. Box 97, A200
Perry, OH 44081

SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO NRC BULLETIN 96-03, PERRY NUCLEAR POWER PLANT,
UNIT NO. 1 (TAC NO. M96162)

Dear Mr. Myers:

By letter dated November 4, 1996, you submitted your response to NRC Bulletin 96-03, "Potential Plugging of Emergency Core Cooling Suction Strainers by Debris in Boiling Water Reactors" (NRCB 96-03), for the Perry Nuclear Power Plant. The NRC staff has performed an initial screening of your response and has identified a potentially serious issue with regard to your implementation schedule. The purpose of this letter is to provide the staff's position relative to meeting the bulletin's requested implementation schedule for the plants having outages in the fall of 1997.

Your letter provided a schedule for your resolution as follows:

- November 1996 - Quarter scale testing complete.
- December 13, 1996 - Complete analysis of testing data.
- December 13, 1996 - Complete 10 CFR 50.59 evaluation.
- January 6, 1997 - Release strainer design for fabrication.
- September 1997 - Strainer installed.

Your letter also states that "should it be determined that an unreviewed safety question exists, it will be necessary to prepare and submit a license amendment request for NRC review and approval. At that point, design and fabrication activity will be suspended thereby jeopardizing the schedule for implementation." This last statement implies that an extension to the implementation schedule will be needed, if you have to submit a license amendment request to the staff.

Although the staff has granted schedular relief for the NRCB 96-03 implementation schedule for licensees having refueling outages in the spring of 1997, the staff position regarding the implementation schedule for plants having refueling outages in the fall of 1997 is clear. The staff is unwilling to consider requests for delays in the implementation schedule. If you identify the need for staff review of a strainer design, then we would expect that you would expedite the schedule to allow adequate time for staff review. If you have concluded that the design change can be made safely and in

accordance with all applicable regulatory requirements, we strongly discourage the suspension of design and procurement activities based solely on the need for staff review. We also feel that better planning may have prevented this schedular problem. For instance, the 10 CFR 50.59 evaluation should have been performed sooner and any submittal, if needed, should have already been submitted. It is not clear why the 10 CFR 50.59 evaluation has been delayed.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss these issues in greater detail, please feel free to call me at (301) 415-3027 or Rob Elliott at (301) 415-1397.

Sincerely,

Original signed by:

Jon B. Hopkins, Sr. Project Manager
Project Directorate III-3
Division of Reactor Projects III/IV
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket No. 50-440

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