

50-259/260/296



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

February 19, 1997

Mr. Oliver D. Kingsley, Jr.
President, TVA Nuclear and
Chief Nuclear Officer
Tennessee Valley Authority
6A Lookout Place
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Chattanooga, Tennessee 37402-2801

SUBJECT: BROWNS FERRY NUCLEAR PLANT UNITS 1, 2, AND 3 - RESPONSE TO
BULLETIN 96-03 (TAC NOS. M96135, M96136, AND M96137)

Dear Mr. Kingsley:

This letter clarifies NRC staff expectations regarding compensatory measures which may be used to defer actions requested by NRC Bulletin (B) 96-03 "Potential Plugging of Emergency Core Cooling Suction Strainers by Debris in Boiling-Water Reactors," dated May 6, 1996. On November 4, 1996, the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), licensee for the Browns Ferry Nuclear Plant (BFN) Units 1, 2, and 3, submitted its response to B 96-03. In its response, TVA notified the NRC that implementation of the final resolution of B 96-03 for BFN Unit 3 is not achievable on the schedule called for in that bulletin. On January 29, 1997, the NRC staff accepted deferral of the bulletin's requested actions if certain compensatory actions were implemented.

In its letter of January 29, 1997, the staff requested, among other things, that TVA perform a thorough drywell and suppression pool inspection of BFN Unit 3, including the vents, downcomers, and ring header. Some confusion has arisen apparently because of differences in terminology used by the staff and TVA's practice. TVA designates the ring header as the relatively small torus underneath the main suppression pool torus which supplies water to the suction of various emergency core cooling system (ECCS) pumps. The staff's intent in requesting the drywell and suppression pool inspection was that, in part, TVA would inspect the header which connects the vents from the drywell. This inspection is intended to ensure that there is no debris present which could interfere with the proper function of the ECCS suction strainers. The suppression pool ring header providing ECCS pump suction is downstream of the suction strainers, so any debris in this area would not contribute to strainer blockage. Therefore, the staff does not expect TVA to inspect the suppression pool ring header. Rather, the staff requests that TVA inspect the BFN Unit 3 vent header, as discussed above.

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Mr. O. D. Kingsley

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Please call me at (301)415-1470 if you have any questions regarding this topic.

Sincerely,

Original signed by
Joseph F. Williams, Project Manager
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Docket Nos. 50-259, 50-260, and 50-296

cc: See next page

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BROWNS FERRY NUCLEAR PLANT

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