

January 28, 2000

Mr. Samuel L. Newton  
Vice President, Operations  
Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Corporation  
185 Old Ferry Road  
Brattleboro, VT 05301

SUBJECT: COMPLETION OF LICENSING ACTION FOR 96-03, "POTENTIAL PLUGGING OF EMERGENCY CORE COOLING SUCTION STRAINERS BY DEBRIS IN BOILING-WATER REACTORS," DATED MAY 6, 1996 - VERMONT YANKEE NUCLEAR POWER STATION (TAC NO. M96174)

Dear Mr Newton:

On May 6, 1996, the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) issued Bulletin (BL) 96-03, "Potential Plugging of Emergency Core Cooling Suction Strainers by Debris in Boiling-Water Reactors" to all holders of operating licenses or construction permits for boiling-water reactors. The NRC issued BL 96-03 to ensure that the emergency core cooling systems (ECCS) in BWRs can perform their intended safety function to mitigate the effects of a postulated loss-of-coolant accident. The BL provided three options for resolving this issue including (1) installation of large capacity passive strainers, (2) installation of self-cleaning strainers, or (3) installation of a backflush system.

In BL 96-03, the NRC staff specifically requested that licensees submit the following reports for each of their facilities:

1. A description of planned actions and mitigative strategies to be used, the schedule for implementation, and proposed technical specification, if appropriate.
2. A report confirming completion and summarizing actions taken.

In response to BL 96-03, you provided letters dated October 31, 1996, November 14, 1997, March 18, 1998, and December 29, 1999, for Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Station. You stated that you planned to install large capacity passive strainers which would be designed using the guidance in the Boiling Water Reactors Owners Group Utility Resolution Guidance (URG). The staff reviewed the URG and issued a safety evaluation on August 20, 1998. By letter dated December 29, 1999, you informed the staff that you had completed all actions requested by the bulletin. These actions included: installing large capacity passive strainers and re-coating the Torus inner surface from the waterline and below.

The staff has reviewed your response and has determined that the actions taken should minimize the potential for clogging of ECCS suction strainers and ensure the capability of the ECCS to provide long-term cooling following a loss-of-coolant-accident as required by 10 CFR 50.46. The staff considers your actions responsive to the concerns raised in BL 96-03.

S. Newton

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Therefore, BL 96-03 is closed for your facility. Detailed reviews of your strainer design and 10 CFR 50.59 evaluation may be performed on a plant-specific basis in the future.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact me at (301) 415-1475.

Sincerely,

*/RA/*

Richard P. Croteau, Project Manager, Section 2  
Project Directorate I  
Division of Licensing Project Management  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket No. 50-271

cc: See next page

S. Newton

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Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Station

cc:

Regional Administrator, Region I  
U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
475 Allendale Road  
King of Prussia, PA 19406

Mr. David R. Lewis  
Shaw, Pittman, Potts & Trowbridge  
2300 N Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20037-1128

Mr. Richard P. Sedano, Commissioner  
Vermont Department of Public Service  
112 State Street  
Montpelier, VT 05620-2601

Mr. Michael H. Dworkin, Chairman  
Public Service Board  
State of Vermont  
112 State Street  
Montpelier, VT 05620-2701

Chairman, Board of Selectmen  
Town of Vernon  
P.O. Box 116  
Vernon, VT 05354-0116

Mr. Richard E. McCullough  
Operating Experience Coordinator  
Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Station  
P.O. Box 157  
Governor Hunt Road  
Vernon, VT 05354

G. Dana Bisbee, Esq.  
Deputy Attorney General  
33 Capitol Street  
Concord, NH 03301-6937

Chief, Safety Unit  
Office of the Attorney General  
One Ashburton Place, 19th Floor  
Boston, MA 02108

Ms. Deborah B. Katz  
Box 83  
Shelburne Falls, MA 01370

Mr. Raymond N. McCandless  
Vermont Department of Health  
Division of Occupational  
and Radiological Health  
108 Cherry Street  
Burlington, VT 05402

Mr. Gautam Sen  
Licensing Manager  
Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power  
Corporation  
185 Old Ferry Road  
Brattleboro, VT 05301

Resident Inspector  
Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Station  
U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
P.O. Box 176  
Vernon, VT 05354

Director, Massachusetts Emergency  
Management Agency  
ATTN: James Muckerheide  
400 Worcester Rd.  
Framingham, MA 01702-5399

Jonathan M. Block, Esq.  
Main Street  
P. O. Box 566  
Putney, VT 05346-0566