

April 4, 2000

MEMORANDUM TO: File

FROM: Robert A. Gramm, Chief, Section 1  
Project Directorate IV & Decommissioning /RA/  
Division of Licensing Project Management  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

SUBJECT: SOUTH TEXAS PROJECT, UNITS 1 AND 2 - TELECONFERENCE TO  
DISCUSS LETTER OF INTENT TO SUBMIT AN EXEMPTION TO  
10 CFR PART 50, APPENDIX J INTEGRATED LEAK RATE TEST  
REQUIREMENTS

On March 29, 2000, NRC staff held a teleconference with personnel from South Texas Project to discuss a January 24, 2000, letter of intent to submit an exemption for 10 CFR Part 50, Appendix J, Type A testing. Participants in the teleconference are listed in the Attachment.

The staff discussed the opinion that the proposed request did not contain sufficient plant specific justification to support making a finding per 10 CFR 50.12. The justifications articulated in the letter were considered by the staff during the recent Appendix J, Option B rulemaking. The staff indicated that the proposal would have to be augmented to include some unique aspects related to the design or operation of the South Texas units. The staff mentioned some concerns that an exemption request would not provide the same degree of public involvement as a rulemaking effort. The staff also mentioned that an assessment of containment leakage performance history during the Option B rulemaking found that some failures due to leakage were found during the Type A testing that would not have been revealed during Type B or C tests. This result indicates the need for some form of simplified testing beyond Type B and C tests to provide reasonable assurance of containment integrity.

The staff outlined the considerations that were part of the Appendix J, Option B rulemaking and the current initiative as Part of SECY-98-300 and SECY-99-264 to develop risk-informed changes to regulatory requirements in 10 CFR Part 50. The prioritization of the rulemaking efforts was discussed along with the fact that industry provided recent (letter from the Nuclear Energy Institute dated January 19, 2000) input that resulted in the Appendix J rulemaking being a low priority candidate. The staff indicated that South Texas should consider working with the industry to re-verify the relative prioritization of Appendix J rulemaking given the potential affect that may result due to considering averted costs.

The staff summarized that they were not opposed to the concept of modifying Appendix J but that further site specific justification would be necessary to pursue an exemption, and that the licensee should consider working with the industry to propose a rulemaking initiative instead of an exemption.

The licensee personnel stated they would re-consider their request based upon the staff feedback and either resubmit the request or meet with the staff to discuss the concept further. The licensee staff did not desire a written response to their proposal at this time.

Attachment: As stated

Docket Nos. 50-498 and 50-499

The licensee personnel stated they would re-consider their request based upon the staff feedback and either resubmit the request or meet with the staff to discuss the concept further. The licensee staff did not desire a written response to their proposal at this time.

Attachment: As stated

Docket Nos. 50-498 and 50-499

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LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

MARCH 29, 2000, TELECONFERENCE

STP LETTER OF INTENT ON

10 CFR PART 50, APPENDIX J EXEMPTION

STP Personnel

Phillip Walker  
Michael Lashley  
Michael Gibbons  
William Stillwell  
Douglas Echard  
Randall Beverly

NRC Personnel

Richard Lobel  
Michael Snodderly  
Robert Gramm

ATTACHMENT