July 20, 2000

MEMORANDUM TO: Joram Hopenfeld
Engineering Research Applications Branch
Division of Engineering Technology
Office of Nuclear Regulatory Research

FROM: James T. Wiggins
Chair, Differing Professional Opinion (DPO) Ad Hoc Panel ***/RA/***
Office of the Executive Director for Operations

SUBJECT: DIFFERING PROFESSIONAL OPINION ON STEAM GENERATOR TUBE INTEGRITY ISSUES SCOPE

This memorandum is in response to your June 29, 2000, memorandum regarding the scope of review by the ad hoc panel formed to address your Differing Professional Opinion (DPO) on Steam Generator Tube Integrity Issues.

Regarding the DPO on steam generator issues, memoranda from the EDO to yourself, dated December 29, 1998, November 1, 1999, and July 20, 2000, addressed the approach for resolving the issues. Consistent with the EDO's November 1, 1999 memorandum, an ad hoc panel was formed to review the issues that remained open after the staff finalized its DPO Consideration Document and you replied to that document.

The scope of review by the DPO ad hoc panel is defined in the November 1, 1999 memorandum from the EDO to you. Within the scope were those issues addressed in the final staff DPO Consideration Document and in your DPO Reply Documents, including the attachments transmitted with these documents. The staff did not specifically address the issue of the potential effects of resonance level vibrations in its Consideration Document. Further, in my view, while your reply discussed concerns about the effects of main steam line break loads on the integrity of steam generator tubes, it did not specifically address the resonance vibration issue. Therefore, rather than have that issue (which I believe to be a substantially new issue) investigated by the ad hoc panel before appropriate staff review, I thought it would be better addressed through the agency's normal process for handling potentially generic technical issues. As such, I initiated discussions with NRR managers regarding the issue. Subsequently, on June 27, 2000, I referred the issue to the Office of Research for consideration under draft Management Directive 6.4 as a candidate for consideration as a generic safety issue.

I regret your disappointment in my decision to handle the resonance vibration issue in this manner, but, in my judgement, it was both a reasonable and appropriate course of action.

In regard to Mr. Spence's participation, Mr. Spence was encouraged to remain on the panel and express his views of the issues in the DPO. I regret that Mr. Spence did not elect to remain on the panel but respect his decision to withdraw.

I hope that this memorandum serves to better clarify the concern regarding the scope of the ad hoc panel's review of the issues in your DPO. Also, I agree that I should have provided you a copy of my June 27, 2000 memorandum to RES; it was an oversight on my part, for which I apologize.

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