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August 14, 2000

ADJUDICATIONS

Secretary
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Attn: Rulemakings and Adjudications Staff
Washington, DC 20555-0001

DOCKET NUMBER

PETITION RULE PRM 50-71
(65 FR 34599)

Subject: Comments Concerning the Petition For Rulemaking by Nuclear Energy Institute (NEI) To amend NRC Regulations To Allow Use of Zirconium-Based Cladding Materials Other Than Zircaloy or ZIRLO (65FR34599, dated May 31, 2000)

Dear Sir/Madam:

This letter is being submitted in response to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's (NRC) request for comments concerning the petition for rulemaking by the Nuclear Energy Institute (NEI) to amend NRC regulations to allow use of zirconium-based cladding materials other than zircaloy or ZIRLO which was published in the Federal Register (i.e., 65FR34599, dated May 31, 2000). The petitioner requests that the NRC amend its regulations to allow nuclear power plants to use zirconium-based cladding materials other than zircaloy or ZIRLO, provided the cladding materials meet the requirements for fuel cladding performance and have received approval by the NRC staff.

PECO Energy appreciates the opportunity to comment on the petition for rulemaking, and offers the following comments for consideration by the NRC.

Comments:

1. The proposed rulemaking should note that if a fuel vendor's cladding has met the requirements for use on a generic basis, a process for the implementing utility to use that fuel under their existing operating license already exists. This ensures that the cladding that has been approved for use by the vendor is appropriate for use in the utility's coolant system under all normal, abnormal and accident conditions.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Very truly yours,

James A. Hutton, Jr.
Director - Licensing

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SECY-02