

December 8, 2000

Representative Lon Burnam
Texas House of Representatives
P.O. Box 2910
Austin, Texas 78768

Dear Representative Burnam:

Thank you for your letter to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) Commissioners dated October 16, 2000, regarding rulemaking on Generic Aging Lessons Learned.

Your letter raises two primary concerns, (1) the inability for members of the public to comment on any of the "generic" issues covered by the report on generic aging lessons learned, and (2) the lack of thorough inspections for issues covered in the report on generic aging lessons learned.

The license renewal requirements as articulated in Part 54 of Title 10 of the Code of Federal Regulations, "Requirements for Renewal of Operating Licenses for Nuclear Power Plants," provide for a plant-specific determination that aging effects can be adequately managed during the period of extended operation. As such, the applicant must submit a license renewal application satisfying those requirements. The Generic Aging Lessons Learned report may be referenced by an applicant in the respective application to demonstrate that the applicant's programs at its facility correspond to those reviewed and approved in the Generic Aging Lessons Learned report. If the material presented in the Generic Aging Lessons Learned report is applicable to the applicant's facility, the NRC staff would find the applicant's reference to the Generic Aging Lessons Learned report acceptable without duplication of the review.

The hearing process is independent from the technical safety review. As discussed in §54.27, "Hearings," a notice of an opportunity for a hearing will be published in the *Federal Register* in accordance with 10 CFR 2.105. Persons whose interest may be affected by the proceedings may request for a hearing or a petition for leave to intervene. The hearing or petition request is based on the proposed action and the applicant's safety analysis of the proposed action, not of the NRC staff's safety evaluation.

License renewal inspection activities are articulated in NRC Inspection Manual Chapter 2516, "Policy and Guidance for the License Renewal Inspection Programs," and Inspection Procedure 71002, "License Renewal Inspection." The primary objective of the license renewal inspection program is to provide the guidance for the inspection of license renewal programs, documentation, and activities necessary for the staff to make a finding that an applicant's license renewal application, aging management programs, demonstrations, implementation activities, and on-site documentation provide reasonable assurance that the effects of aging will be effectively managed consistent with the current licensing basis during the period of extended operation. There are no provisions for change in scope related to an applicant's usage of the Generic Aging Lessons Learned report.

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Additional information about the license renewal process, related evaluation guidance and opportunities for public involvement in the safety and environmental reviews for individual license renewal applications are available on the NRC's webpage at <<http://www.nrc.gov/NRC/REACTOR/LR/index.html>>. I hope that this response relieves your concerns about the public opportunities for information about and involvement in the power reactor licensing process. If you would like any further information about the license renewal process, please contact me at (301) 415-1183 or email cig@nrc.gov.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Christopher I. Grimes, Chief
License Renewal and Standardization Branch
Division of Regulatory Improvement Programs
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

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