

February 8, 2001

Mr. Michael Kansler
Sr. Vice President and Chief
Operating Officer
Entergy Nuclear Operations, Inc.
440 Hamilton Avenue
White Plains, NY 10601

SUBJECT: JAMES A. FITZPATRICK NUCLEAR POWER PLANT - 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 (TAC NO. M96146)

Dear Mr. Kansler:

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.

On November 21, 2000, the Power Authority of the State of New York's (PASNY's) ownership interest in FitzPatrick was transferred to Entergy Nuclear FitzPatrick, LLC, to possess and use FitzPatrick and to Entergy Nuclear Operations, Inc. to possess, use and operate FitzPatrick. By letter dated January 26, 2001, Entergy Nuclear Operations requested that the NRC continue to review and act on all requests before the Commission which had been submitted by PASNY before the transfer. Accordingly, the staff continued its review of PASNY's responses concerning the issue of BL 96-03 as being the responses for FitzPatrick.

In response to BL 96-03, PASNY, the former licensee, provided a letter dated October 29, 1996, as supplemented on February 3, 1998, September 16, 1998, October 13, 1998, October 22, 1998, and Entergy Nuclear Operations, Inc. provided a letter dated December 11, 2000. The PASNY stated that they 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 11, 2000, Entergy informed the staff that they had

completed all actions requested by the BL. These actions included: (1) passive strainers installed in the fall of 1998 during Refueling Outage (RFO) 13, (2) removal of the microporous insulation in the drywell, (3) completion of satisfactory testing of the strainers, (4) desludging of the suppression pool and (5) inspection of the ECCS suction strainers during RFO 14 and a commitment to desludge the suppression pool once every other RFO commencing with RFO 15.

The staff has reviewed the licensee's responses 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 the licensee's actions responsive to the concerns raised in BL 96-03. Therefore, BL 96-03 is closed for the facility. The NRC may perform detailed reviews of strainer design and the 10 CFR 50.59 evaluation on a plant-specific basis in the future.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact Guy S. Vissing at 301-415-1441.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Guy S. Vissing, Senior Project Manager, Section 1
Project Directorate I
Division of Licensing Project Management
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket No. 50-333

cc: See next page

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