

March 27, 1996

Mr. William H. Rasin, Vice President,
Technical/Regulatory
Nuclear Energy Institute
1776 "I" Street, NW
Washington, DC 20006-3708

Dear Mr. Rasin:

This is in response to your letter dated February 23, 1996, on behalf of the Nuclear Energy Institute (NEI), concerning a petition to amend 10 CFR 50.54(a). Your letter requested that we provide our schedule for resolution of this petition. The NRC received the petition for rulemaking on June 12, 1995. The petition, dated June 8, 1995, was docketed as PRM-50-62. The petition requested that the NRC amend its regulations in 10 CFR 50.54(a) to permit licensees to make certain changes to their quality assurance programs without prior approval from the NRC.

As you noted, the petition was published for 75-day comment in the Federal Register on September 14, 1995, and comments were requested by November 28, 1995. As part of the Federal Register notice (FRN), the staff also requested specific comment on eight issues. NEI provided comments on the FRN and responses to the eight issues, by letter dated November 28, 1995. NEI also provided further information concerning their petition via a draft industry guideline document with examples to assist licensees in implementing and interpreting the petition, Guideline for Quality Assurance Program Description Changes Per 10 CFR 50.54(a). Seventeen other comment letters, including one supplementary letter, were also received. These comments are currently under review by the staff.

Under procedures established by the NRC Executive Director for Operations (EDO), the staff is required to recommend to the Commission whether to deny or grant the petition in whole or in part. The recommendation to the Commission is scheduled to be made by September 14, 1996. If the staff recommendation is to deny the petition following Commission approval, a notice of denial will be published in the Federal Register. If the staff recommendation is to grant the petition, in whole or in part, the rulemaking normally would be completed within 18 months of approval of the staff recommendation.

Sincerely,

Original Signed by:
James L. Milhoan

James L. Milhoan, Deputy Executive Director
for Nuclear Reactor Regulation,
Regional Operations and Research

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*See previous concurrences

OFC	RDB:DRB*	RDB:DRB*	D:DRA*	D:RES*	EDO
NAME	CNilsen:aw	TMartin	BMMorris	DLMorrison	JMilhoan
DATE	03/06/96	03/06/96	03/13/96	03/14/96	3/27/96

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Sincerely,

James L. Milhoan, Deputy Executive Director
 for Nuclear Reactor Regulation,
 Regional Operations and Research
 Office of the Executive Director
 for Operations

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