

August 24, 2001

Mr. Jeffrey A. Benjamin
Vice President - Licensing
and Regulatory Affairs
Exelon Generation Company, LLC
4300 Winfield Road
Warrenville, IL 60555

SUBJECT: THREE MILE ISLAND NUCLEAR STATION, UNIT 1, REACTOR VESSEL
HEAD INSPECTION AND REPAIR

Dear Mr. Benjamin:

I am responding to your letter of August 1, 2001, to Mr. Samuel Collins, Director, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation, regarding the reactor pressure vessel (RPV) head inspection and repair planned for the Three Mile Island Nuclear Station, Unit 1 (TMI-1), during your fall 2001 refueling outage. You stated your intent to perform a visual inspection for leakage/boric acid deposits of all reactor vessel head thermocouple nozzles and control rod drive mechanism nozzles. You further indicated that leaking nozzles would be repaired and that your repair plans would institute remote machine repair processes similar to those used at the Oconee Nuclear Station - Unit 2.

On August 3, 2001, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) issued NRC Bulletin 2001-01, "Circumferential Cracking of Reactor Pressure Vessel Head Penetration Nozzles." This bulletin was issued to request that pressurized water reactor (PWR) licensees provide information related to the structural integrity of the reactor vessel head penetration (VHP) nozzles for their facilities, including the extent of VHP nozzle leakage and cracking to date. The bulletin also requested PWR licensees provide information related to inspections and repairs that have been undertaken to satisfy regulatory requirements, and the basis for concluding that future inspections will ensure compliance with regulatory requirements.

The criteria contained in the bulletin were reiterated to the industry, along with NRC staff expectations as to the content of bulletin responses, during an August 15, 2001, meeting in NRC headquarters. Mr. George Rombold of your staff was in attendance at that meeting.

The NRC staff wishes again to reiterate that the information requested in NRC Bulletin 2001-01 is necessary to assess the potential safety significance of the circumferential cracking of VHP nozzles and is also necessary to assess appropriate licensee actions and to determine if additional regulatory action is necessary. The information provided to date does not provide a sufficient technical basis to show that conditions adverse to quality are being effectively managed.

In summary, the NRC staff expects that you will fully respond with the information requested in the bulletin, and that you will take appropriate corrective actions, as necessary, based on your inspections during the upcoming refueling outage for TMI-1. If I can be of any additional assistance, please let me know.

J. Benjamin

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August 24, 2001

If you have any additional questions, please contact your NRC project manager, Mr. Timothy G. Colburn at (301) 415-1402.

Sincerely,

/RA/

John A. Zwolinski, Director
Division of Licensing Project Management
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket No. 50-289

cc: see next page

If you have any additional questions, please contact your NRC project manager, Mr. Timothy G. Colburn at (301) 415-1402.

Sincerely,

/RA/

John A. Zwolinski, Director
Division of Licensing Project Management
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket No. 50-289

cc: see next page

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Three Mile Island Nuclear Station, Unit No. 1

cc:

George H. Gellrich
Plant Manager
AmerGen Energy Company, LLC
P. O. Box 480
Middletown, PA 17057

Michael P. Gallagher
Director - Licensing
Exelon Generation Company, LLC
Nuclear Group Headquarters
Correspondence Control
P.O. Box 160
Kennett Square, PA 19348

Edwin C. Fuhrer
Manager - Regulatory Engineering
AmerGen Energy Company, LLC
P.O. Box 480
Middletown, PA 17057

Edward J. Cullen, Jr.
Vice President and General Counsel
Exelon Generation Company, LLC
300 Exelon Way
KSB 3-W
Kennett Square, PA 19348

Jeffrey A. Benjamin
Licensing - Vice President
Exelon Corporation
1400 Opus Place, Suite 900
Downer's Grove, IL 60521

Chairman
Board of County Commissioners
of Dauphin County
Dauphin County Courthouse
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Chairman
Board of Supervisors
of Londonderry Township
R.D. #1, Geyers Church Road
Middletown, PA 17057

Senior Resident Inspector (TMI-1)
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
P.O. Box 219
Middletown, PA 17057

Regional Administrator
Region I
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
475 Allendale Road
King of Prussia, PA 19406

Michael A. Schoppman
Framatome ANP
Suite 705
1911 North Ft. Myer Drive
Rosslyn, VA 22209

David J. Allard, Director
Bureau of Radiation Protection
Pennsylvania Department of
Environmental Resources
P.O. Box 2063
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dr. Judith Johnsrud
National Energy Committee
Sierra Club
433 Orlando Avenue
State College, PA 16803

John F. Rogge, Region I
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
475 Allendale Road
King of Prussia, PA 19406

Mr. Mark E. Warner
Vice President - TMI Unit 1
AmerGen Energy Company, LLC
P.O. Box 480
Middletown, PA 17057

Eric Epstein
TMI Alert
4100 Hillsdale Road
Harrisburg, PA 17112