UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
REGION II
ATLANTA FEDERAL CENTER
61 FORSYTH STREET, SW, SUITE 23T85
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30303

FILE COPY

August 8, 1997

MEMORANDUM TO: Rossana Raspa, Office of the Inspector General (OIG)

FROM: AJI Algis J. Ignatonis, Senior Allegations Coordinator
Enforcement and Investigation Coordination Staff (EICS)

SUBJECT: ALLEGATION NUMBERS RII-1996-A-0249 AND RII-1997-A-0148; ISSUE OF BROKEN SCREWS IN ICE CONDENSER SYSTEM

Per your request, attached is a copy of Region II response to the alleger's concern on broken ice condenser screws for the Watts Bar facility. This response closed out allegation number RII-1996-A-0249. However, as I mentioned to you previously, the alleger raised new issues and questions and we opened allegation case number RII-1997-A-0148. This case remains open and relevant information copied from the case file is attached for your information. Should you have further questions regarding this matter, please contact me at (404) 562-4426.

Attachments:
1. Copy of RII-1996-A-0249 Response to Alleger dated July 7, 1997
2. Excerpts from Allegation Case File RII-1997-A-0148

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OU

ATTACHMENT 1

UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
REGION II
ATLANTA FEDERAL CENTER
61 FORSYTH STREET, SW, SUITE 23T85
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30303

July 7, 1997

Mr. Curtis C. Overall
3533 Ozark Ave.
Cleveland, TN 37312

SUBJECT: RII-96-A-0249 - INTEGRITY OF ICE CONDENSER

Dear Mr. Overall:

This refers to our letter dated May 16, 1997, in which we advised you that we had completed our review of technical concerns for the Duke Power Company sites and were continuing our review of your concerns at the Watts Bar Nuclear Plant.

Our inspection regarding your technical concerns at Watts Bar has been completed and our findings are documented in the enclosures to this letter. Based on the information provided, we were not able to substantiate your concerns.

This concludes the staff's activities regarding your technical concern(s) associated with this allegation. We are continuing to monitor your Department of Labor activities. In addition, as discussed in our letter to you dated July 1, 1997, we will address your additional concerns under RII-1997-A-0148. If you have any questions, you may contact me at 1-800-577-8510 or (404) 562-4612 or by mail at P.O. Box 845, Atlanta, GA 30301.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Jackson for

William E. Holland, Chief
Maintenance Branch
Division of Reactor Safety

Enclosures: 1. Allegation Evaluation Report
2. NRC Inspection Report
No.: 50-390/97-04

Certified Mail No. Z 238 518 081
RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

ALLEGATION EVALUATION REPORT

ALLEGATION NUMBER RII-96-A-0249

INTEGRITY OF ICE CONDENSER

WATTS BAR NUCLEAR PLANT

DOCKET 50-390

ALLEGATION:

ISSUE 1

The concerned individual stated that TVA (Watts Bar) recently laid him off because the system engineer function he was doing on the ice condenser system did not require a full time position. The concerned individual stated that the system required full time attention due to the many challenges the system presented based on his many years of experience with it. The concerned individual was concerned the system may degrade and not receive sufficient attention. The concerned individual noted the assigned person for the ice condenser system had the responsibility for two other systems.

ISSUE 2

The alleger stated that he had a technical concern involving broken screws which were found in the Watts Bar, Unit 1 ice condenser in 1995. He indicated that the licensee issued a problem evaluation report (PER) to perform an evaluation; that TVA initially performed a metallurgical analysis which was subsequently given to Westinghouse to evaluate; and then the issue was quickly analyzed away and the first report was not used to support the analysis. The alleger was concerned whether the analysis was adequate.

DISCUSSION:

ISSUE 1

The inspector conducted a review of the System Engineer (SE) activities associated with the Ice Condenser System (ICS) and reviewed ICS information to assess whether SE activities were in accordance with licensee requirements (Procedure SSP-12.52, "System Engineering Program," Rev. 7) and the ICS exhibited adverse trends regarding performance. This included a review of Work Orders and Problem Evaluation Reports issued during the previous six months, review of the open Work Order list, review of the system status report (first quarter, 1997), review of surveillance results, review of trend information, review of SE notebook information, and discussions with the SE.

The inspector noted that some individual component problems had occurred, however, no system adverse performance trends were noted. The SE was performing required duties including system walkdowns, trend reviews, maintaining system notebook information, reviewing testing results, and developing the system status report. The SE indicated he was assigned one other small system and assists on the valve testing program. He stated that this affords him sufficient time for ICS overview. The SE exhibited good knowledge of the ICS and was maintaining good documentation. Significant trend data, such as ice bed temperature, was maintained and charted. Some minor problems had been noted during recent surveillance observations. These included blockage of three channels and minor amounts of ice noted on the upper plenum top deck blankets and support beams. The channels were unblocked and the ice removed. Additional inspections found no other problems. Overall, the ICS was rated White (acceptable) with the possibility of being rated Green (excellent) during the second quarter and category (a)(2) (acceptable) for the Maintenance Rule. Unreliability was rated at zero.

The ICS had been adequately maintained to prevent any adverse performance trends. The SE was performing his duties well and has provided sufficient oversight of the ICS.

ISSUE 2

By review of the licensee's metallurgical investigation results that were documented in Central Laboratory Services, Report No. 95-1021, dated June 19, 1995, and WBPER950246 Rev.0, the inspector ascertained the following:

> The chemical analyses determined that the screws were fabricated from material with carbon, manganese and sulfur contents that were within the typical range of AISI 1022 plain carbon steel. Microhardness surveys revealed a relatively high surface hardness and a significantly softer core. This condition indicated that the screws were carburized. This condition also corresponded with the microstructure described in the subject metallurgical investigation report and was confirmed by the associated photomicrographs.

On April 26, 1995, the licensee wrote an Adverse Condition Report to document the discovery of a rather significant quantity of Ice Condenser ice basket, sheet metal screws (screws), both in sections and in whole. The screws were found in the temporary waste ice melt tank. This report was assigned number WBPER950246, Rev.0, for tracking purposes. The task of loading the ice basket was completed on February 17, 1995. The tank where the screws were found had remained in place until April 1995, when it was removed for cleaning purposes. The subject screws were identified as item No. 9 on Westinghouse (W), Drawing Number 1191E57, Contract No. 71C62-5411-1. Following this discovery, the licensee formulated an action plan which included a metallurgical investigation to determine the mode of the failure and verify the type of material used to manufacture the screws. The investigation included random samples of the broken screws, others that were removed from ice baskets in service for this purpose, and others that were removed from stores at the warehouse.

By review of the licensee's metallurgical investigation results that were documented in Central Laboratory Services, Report No. 95-1021, dated June 19, 1995, the inspector ascertained the following:

> In reference to the 170 broken sheet metal screw heads and the 32 whole screws found inside the temporary waste ice melt tank, the investigation report disclosed that the root cause assessment revealed the screws were broken because of apparent over-tightening at the time these ice baskets were being assembled. One complete ice meltdown and one cooldown since the initial assembly were regarded as possible contributing factors. A visual inspection of a random sample of ice baskets, showed no evidence of broken or missing screws from the interconnecting ice basket coupling rings.

The Westinghouse analysis and assessment indicated that the interconnecting ice basket coupling rings were capable of performing their design function against all design basis accidents loads and surveillance loadings with a minimum of 10 sheet metal screws instead of the 12 required by design.

In reference to the concern being applicable to the Sequoyah Nuclear Plant (SQN), the subject report indicated that no broken or missing sheet metal screws have ever been found at SQN during any of the post-servicing periods, with the exception of a few (<10), that were attributed to basket disassembly or upper reinforcement ring replacement.

The chemical analyses determined that the screws were fabricated from material with carbon, manganese and sulfur contents that were within the typical range of AISI 1022 plain carbon steel. Microhardness surveys revealed a relatively high surface hardness and a significantly softer core. This condition indicated that the screws were carburized. This condition also corresponded with the microstructure described in the subject metallurgical investigation report and confirmed by the associated photomicrographs.

By this review, the inspector concluded that the screws in question were fabricated from material made from AISI 1022 plain carbon steel that was heat treated to meet the requirements of W Equipment Specification No. 678956.

CONCLUSION:

ISSUE 1

The results of our inspection are documented in NRC Inspection Report No. 50-390/97-04, paragraph E2.2 and E2.3.

The concern that the Ice Condenser System may degrade and not receive sufficient attention was not substantiated.

ISSUE 2

The inspection determined the analysis for the cause of broken ice condenser screws reasonable and the licensee's technical report determined the ice condenser screws were fabricated from material made from AISI 1022 plain carbon steel that was heat treated to meet the requirements of W Equipment Specification No. 678956. The concern was not substantiated.

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61 FORSYTH STREET, SW, SUITE 23T85
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30303

July 7, 1997

Mr. Curtis C. Overall
3533 Ozark Ave.
Cleveland, TN 37312

SUBJECT: RII-96-A-0249 - INTEGRITY OF ICE CONDENSER

Dear Mr. Overall:

This refers to our letter dated May 16, 1997, in which we advised you that we had completed our review of technical concerns for the Duke Power Company sites and were continuing our review of your concerns at the Watts Bar Nuclear Plant.

Our inspection regarding your technical concerns at Watts Bar has been completed and our findings are documented in the enclosures to this letter. Based on the information provided, we were not able to substantiate your concerns.

This concludes the staff's activities regarding your technical concern(s) associated with this allegation. We are continuing to monitor your Department of Labor activities. In addition, as discussed in our letter to you dated July 1, 1997, we will address your additional concerns under RII-1997-A-0148. If you have any questions, you may contact me at 1-800-577-8510 or (404) 562-4612 or by mail at P.O. Box 845, Atlanta, GA 30301.

Sincerely,

Candace Julian for

William E. Holland, Chief
Maintenance Branch
Division of Reactor Safety

Enclosures: 1. Allegation Evaluation Report
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No.: 50-390/97-04

Certified Mail No. Z 238 518 081
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ALLEGATION EVALUATION REPORT

ALLEGATION NUMBER RII-96-A-0249

INTEGRITY OF ICE CONDENSER

WATTS BAR NUCLEAR PLANT

DOCKET 50-390

ALLEGATION:

ISSUE 1

The concerned individual stated that TVA (Watts Bar) recently laid him off because the system engineer function he was doing on the ice condenser system did not require a full time position. The concerned individual stated that the system required full time attention due to the many challenges the system presented based on his many years of experience with it. The concerned individual was concerned the system may degrade and not receive sufficient attention. The concerned individual noted the assigned person for the ice condenser system had the responsibility for two other systems.

ISSUE 2

The alleger stated that he had a technical concern involving broken screws which were found in the Watts Bar, Unit 1 ice condenser in 1995. He indicated that the licensee issued a problem evaluation report (PER) to perform an evaluation; that TVA initially performed a metallurgical analysis which was subsequently given to Westinghouse to evaluate; and then the issue was quickly analyzed away and the first report was not used to support the analysis. The alleger was concerned whether the analysis was adequate.

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The ICS had been adequately maintained to prevent any adverse performance trends. The SE was performing his duties well and has provided sufficient oversight of the ICS.

ISSUE 2

By review of the licensee's metallurgical investigation results that were documented in Central Laboratory Services, Report No. 95-1021, dated June 19, 1995, and WBPER950246 Rev.0, the inspector ascertained the following:

> The chemical analyses determined that the screws were fabricated from material with carbon, manganese and sulfur contents that were within the typical range of AISI 1022 plain carbon steel. Microhardness surveys revealed a relatively high surface hardness and a significantly softer core. This condition indicated that the screws were carburized. This condition also corresponded with the microstructure described in the subject metallurgical investigation report and was confirmed by the associated photomicrographs.

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The Westinghouse analysis and assessment indicated that the interconnecting ice basket coupling rings were capable of performing their design function against all design basis accidents loads and surveillance loadings with a minimum of 10 sheet metal screws instead of the 12 required by design.

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By this review, the inspector concluded that the screws in question were fabricated from material made from AISI 1022 plain carbon steel that was heat treated to meet the requirements of W Equipment Specification No. 678956.

CONCLUSION:

ISSUE 1

The results of our inspection are documented in NRC Inspection Report No. 50-390/97-04, paragraph E2.2 and E2.3.

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ISSUE 2

The inspection determined the analysis for the cause of broken ice condenser screws reasonable and the licensee's technical report determined the ice condenser screws were fabricated from material made from AISI 1022 plain carbon steel that was heat treated to meet the requirements of W Equipment Specification No. 678956. The concern was not substantiated.

101 MARIETTA STREET, N.W., SUITE 2900
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30323

July 7, 1997

EA 97-177

Tennessee Valley Authority
ATTN: Mr. Oliver D. Kingsley, Jr.
President, TVA Nuclear and
Chief Nuclear Officer
6A Lookout Place
1101 Market Street
Chattanooga, TN 37402-2801

SUBJECT: NRC INTEGRATED INSPECTION REPORT NOS. 50-390/97-04, 50-391/97-04 AND NOTICE OF VIOLATION

Dear Mr. Kingsley:

This refers to the inspection conducted on April 27 through June 7, 1997, at the Watts Bar facility. The enclosed report presents the results of this inspection.

Based on the results of this inspection, the NRC determined that four violations of NRC requirements occurred. These violations are cited in the enclosed Notice of Violation (Notice) and the circumstances surrounding them are described in detail in the subject inspection report. Violation A involved the failure of your operators to promptly respond to an annunciator for low air pressure on Diesel Generator 2A-A and previous corrective actions failed to prevent recurrence. Violation B occurred due to a failure to follow procedure requirements which resulted in the Auxiliary Building Gas Treatment System being inoperable. Violation C involved the failure to perform procedurally required radiation surveys. Violation D involved the failure to include radiation monitor heat trace components in the preventative maintenance program.

You are required to respond to this letter and should follow the instructions specified in the enclosed Notice when preparing your response. The NRC will use your response, in part, to determine whether further enforcement action is necessary to ensure compliance with regulatory requirements.

ATTACHMENT 2

INDEX OF CONCERNS

RII-1997-A-0148

RII-1997-A-0148 *Thursday, July 03, 1997*

CONCERN: 1 Engineering Former Licensee Employee Power Reactor

DESCRIPTION: PER JUNE 2, 1997, PHONE CALL AT ALLEGER'S REQUEST, ALLEGER PROVIDED ADDITIONAL CONCERNS RELATED TO THE ISSUE OF BROKEN ICE CONDENSER SCREWS. REFERENCE ALLEGATION RII-1996-A-0249.

REGARDING LICENSEE'S ISSUANCE OF TECH REPORTS ASSOCIATED WITH PROBLEM EVALUATION REPORT (PER) ON BROKEN SCREW HEADS AT WATTS BAR, THE ALLEGER STATED THAT "IT WAS STATED BY TVA's CORPORATE METTALURGICAL STAFF MEMBER THAT THE CENTRAL LAB STAFF WASN'T QUALIFIED TO MAKE DECISIONS ON FAILURE MODES."

SUBSTANTIATED

CLOSURE:

07/01/97

June 30, 1997

NOTE TO: Allegation Review Panel

FROM: William E. Holland, Chief, Maintenance Branch, DRS

SUBJECT: LETTER FROM CONCERNED INDIVIDUAL (CI) RELATING TO ALLEGATION NUMBER RII-1996-A-0249, ICE CONDENSER ISSUE INVOLVING BROKEN SCREWS

On June 2, 1997, at approximately 6:40 p.m., I called the concerned individual at his request. The concerned individual had received our letter of May 16, 1997, which addressed the technical issues of the subject allegation associated with Duke Power Co. A summary of that conversation is attached.

I said that I would like him to write me a letter stating his additional concerns and listing all documents we could review so I could validate whether our inspections had reviewed all appropriate information. I received a letter from the concerned individual dated June 10, 1997. The letter provided the following questions that the concerned individual felt needed to be asked of Duke Power regarding the integrity of the ice condenser ice basket screws. In addition, he discussed additional information relating to the TVA Central Laboratory Services reports and information relating to closeout of the Watts Bar ice condenser ice basket screw issue at Sequoyah Nuclear Plant.

1. The CI stated "It was stated by TVA's [redacted] that the Central Lab Staff wasn't qualified to make decisions on failure modes!"

2. The CI stated "during development of the PER, I called upon Sequoyah for assistance to obtain a few of their ice basket screws to have analyzed, but my request was clearly denied in fear of it raising a generic concern that could shut them down."

3. The CI stated " In your report, Duke personnel stated that they have never found loose or broken ice basket screws on the floor of the ice condenser since the plants began commercial operation. In this letter you'll find the enclosed copy of notes outlining the conversation I had with Duke Power's [redacted] at which time he was actively involved with their ice condenser system." Note page attached.

4. The CI requested the following questions be asked associated with our inspection effort at Duke Power Company.

   1) [redacted] did you have a conversation with Mr. Curtis Overall of TVA (WBN) concerning failed ice basket screws? and what was your response? Note: [redacted] can be reached at [redacted]"

   2) "Was the inspection by the NRC made at the McGuire Plant during the ice basket servicing period of the outage? or after all work and post cleanup was completed? rendering the ice condenser floor clean."

   3) "Were you aware of the discovery of broken ice basket screws at TVA's WBN?"

4) "Did you know that through their analysis that cracks were found in screws that were in service, and even in new screws in stock?"

5) Did you know that the tested ice basket screws were of AISI 1022 carbon steel material, the same as yours?"

The above information identifies new issues associated with the CI and his concern for ice condenser ice baskets. I believe the issues need to be followed up by the NRC Office of Investigations. We need to determine if we are being given factual information from both TVA and Duke Power licensees.

I propose we close RII-1996-A-0249 as currently planned and open a new allegation for the new items which potentially fall into the 10 CFR 50.5 arena. We can tell the CI in our letter addressing original issues 1 and 2 that we received his letter of June 10, 1997, and will followup on the new issues during forthcoming inspections.

cc: J. Jaudon
C. Casto

June 6, 1997

NOTE TO: Bruno Uryc, Director
Enforcement and Investigations Coordination Staff (EICS)

FROM: William E. Holland, Chief, Maintenance Branch, DRS

SUBJECT: PHONE CONVERSATION WITH CONCERNED INDIVIDUAL RELATING TO ALLEGATION NUMBER RII-1996-A-0249, ICE CONDENSER ISSUE INVOLVING BROKEN SCREWS

On June 2, 1997, at approximately 6:40 p.m., I called the concerned individual at his request. The concerned individual had received our letter of May 16, 1997, which addressed the technical issues of the subject allegation associated with Duke Power Co.

The concerned individual first asked if all the other issues identified in the report attached to the letter (Report Nos. 50-369, 370/97-04) were being addressed. I said we sent him a full 6-week integrated report, and all issues docketed in the report were being appropriately addressed. He then focused on the technical issues associated with his concerns at McGuire and Catawba. He said he understood what we had reviewed; however, he was not sure we talked to the right people. He said he had names of people he had discussed ice condenser screw fastener issues with. He did not provide me with the names. In addition, he talked about the ice condenser issues he dealt with at Watts Bar. He said he did not believe the PER that he wrote at Watts Bar was properly dispositioned for Sequoyah. He mentioned that one critical issue at Watts Bar was cracking that was found in the screws. He said he believed the cracking combined with missing ice condenser screws was a concern.

After the concerned individual talked for about 45 minutes, I said that I would like him to write me a letter stating his additional concerns and listing all documents we could review so I could validate whether our inspections had reviewed all appropriate information. He agreed to do this. This was the first time I had talked to the concerned individual. He seemed very knowledgeable of the ice condenser system and my sensing was he was sincere.

The telephone conversation lasted over one hour, and may have identified new concerns which we need to review.

I propose we wait until the concerned individual sends me the letter we discussed. Then I will review the letter information against the information we have already inspected. At that time, if new concerns are identified, we should submit then to the ARP, open a new allegation, if the ARP decides to do so, and close the existing one. I would appreciate any feedback you or your staff has on this proposal.

cc: J. Jaudon
C. Casto

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ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30303

FILE COPY

July 1, 1997

Mr. Curtis C. Overall
3533 Ozark Avenue, NW
Cleveland, TN 37312

SUBJECT: ALLEGATION REPORT RII-1997-A-0148

Dear Mr. Overall:

This letter refers to your June 2, 1997, phone communications with Mr. William E. Holland of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) and your June 10, 1997, follow-up letter to the NRC regarding integrity of ice condenser screws at TVA's Watts Bar and Sequoyah facilities and Duke Power Company's Catawba and McGuire facilities.

Enclosure 1 to this letter documents your concerns as we understand them. We have initiated actions to develop and examine the facts and circumstances of your concerns. Therefore, if we have misunderstood or mischaracterized your concerns as described in the enclosure, please contact me so that we can assure that they are adequately addressed prior to the completion of our review. Once we complete our review, we will inform you of the results.

Enclosure 2 contains an NRC brochure "Reporting Safety Concerns to the NRC." It includes information on the allegation process, identity protection, and handling of discrimination against workers.

If a request is filed under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) related to your areas of concern, the information provided will, to the extent consistent with that act, be purged of names and other potential identifiers. Further, you should be aware that you are not considered a confidential source unless confidentiality has been granted in writing.

Should you have further questions regarding this matter, please contact me at (404) 562-4426. Collect calls will be accepted. You can also contact me by calling 1-800-577-8510 or respond in writing. Our mailing address is P.O. Box 845, Atlanta, GA 30301.

Sincerely,

Algis J. Ignatonis

Al Ignatonis,
Senior Allegations Coordinator
Enforcement and Investigation
Coordination Staff

Enclosures: 1. Statement of Concerns
2. NRC brochure "Reporting Safety Concerns to the NRC"

Certified Mail Number: P 154 568 155
RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED