March 11, 2002

Alex Marion
Nuclear Energy Institute
1776 I Street, Suite 400
Washington, DC 20006-3708

SUBJECT: Reactor Pressure Vessel Head at Davis Besse Nuclear Power Station

Dear Mr. Marion:

This letter documents the teleconference with you, members of the Materials Reliability Program (MRP), Mr. Jack Strosnider and members of the NRC staff on Thursday, March 7, 2002, and a follow-up call with you, members of the MRP, members of the NRC staff, and me on Friday, March 8, 2002.

These calls were held in response to the discovery by First Energy Nuclear Operating Company of significant thinning in the reactor pressure vessel (RPV) head at the Davis Besse Nuclear Power Station on March, 7, 2002. The finding at Davis Besse raises a number of questions with respect to the integrity of reactor pressure vessel heads at other units.

In response to the Davis Besse issue, I am asking NEI to respond to the following comments/questions by Wednesday, March 13, 2002: (1) for plants that have completed their Bulletin 2001-01, "Circumferential Cracking of Reactor Pressure Vessel Head Penetration Nozzles," inspections, discuss whether the inspections were sufficient to detect degradation similar to that found at Davis Besse, (2) for plants that have not performed Bulletin 2001-01 inspections, justify the basis for their continued operation, and (3) address the risk significance of this occurrence including an assessment of the effect of such degradation on the structural integrity of the reactor coolant pressure boundary.

I am asking for your response in a timely manner because of the potential safety significance of this occurrence and to assist in evaluating the generic implications of the Davis Besse findings.

Sincerely,
/ra/

Brian W. Sheron, Associate Director
for Project Licensing and Technical Analysis
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

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Brian W. Sheron, Associate Director
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