

April 25, 2002

MEMORANDUM TO: Leslie Barnett, Acting Director
Project Directorate IV
Division of Licensing Project Management
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

FROM: Jack Cushing, Project Manager, Section 2
Project Directorate IV /RA/
Division of Licensing Project Management
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

SUBJECT: SUMMARY OF SEMIANNUAL MEETING HELD ON MARCH 5, 2002,
WITH COMBUSTION ENGINEERING OWNERS GROUP EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE

On March 5, 2002, the staff held a public meeting with the Combustion Engineering Owners Group (CEOG) Executive Committee at the Capital Hilton in Washington, DC. The purpose of this meeting was to exchange information and to provide a forum for discussion of topics related to NRC and CEOG activities. Attachment 1 is a list of the meeting attendees. The handouts used by the CEOG are available in Adams under accession number ML020730019.

Opening Comments

Mr. Collins, Director, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation, provided the opening remarks. He acknowledged the importance of the CEOG/NRC Management Meetings as a forum to exchange ideas and provide feedback on the performance of both the NRC and the CEOG. He also stated that these meetings are an opportunity to align expectations between the NRC and the owners groups. The security issues arising from the events of September 11, 2001, in regards to their impact on public confidence and the burden on both the NRC and the industry was discussed. Dr. Sheron, Associate Director for Project Licensing and Technical Analysis, asked if the industry has been working to keep the public informed about security in order to allay public fears in the local communities. Mr. Overbeck, the Chairman of the CEOG, said that the security issues have made communication with the public more difficult, but they have been conducting outreach to the local communities to allay the fears. Mr. Overbeck noted they have worked very hard to inform the public of nuclear power and to demystify its existence. Palo Verde intends to reopen its visitor center once security issues are resolved. The events of September 11, 2001, have placed an additional workload on both the licensees and the staff. Mr. Collins cautioned that although security is highlighted, utilities must keep focused on operating plant safety. It was noted that onsite inspection will be done by the NRC to verify compliance with the requirements of the Order for interim safeguards and security compensatory measures that was issued to licensees on February 25, 2002.

Mr. Collins discussed the importance of risk-informed technical specifications (RITS), the use of RITS in the control room and their impact on the operators. Lessons learned from RITS will need to be fed back to other technical specification changes. Mr. Collins highlighted the challenges facing plants on reactor vessel head (RVH) nozzle cracking and with steam generator (SG) tube degradation. The NRC is encouraged to see utilities pursuing RVH and SG replacements. Mr. Collins also noted that emergency preparedness is spotlighted given the recent Indian Point event. Licensing of next generation plants is a new area for the NRC and there will be challenges given the different reactor designs.

Mr. Overbeck thanked the NRC for hosting the meeting and for having the meeting in conjunction with the Regulatory Information Conference (RIC). The CEOG appreciates the opportunity to meet the NRC senior management and to discuss various issues. Mr. Overbeck noted that the CEOG and Westinghouse Owners Group (WOG) may consolidate by January 2004, however many details need to be worked out prior to the actual consolidation.

Dr. Sheron stated that licensees' projections for license amendments expected to be submitted are used by the NRC to budget resources to support the license amendments. The NRC has received a response from about 80 percent of licensees and the aggregate number of license amendments projected is much less than the historical value (800 versus 1500). He thought the industry could do a much better job of projecting the number of license amendments they planned to submit. Mr. Overbeck agreed that the industry could do better and he thought that 45 percent of the license amendments are not emergent work.

Owners Group Report

Mr. Bernier provided a brief presentation on the CEOG structure, owners group consolidation, topical report submittals, and the CEOG strategic issues. Mr. Bernier noted that the owners group consolidation may occur, but it is premature to say it will happen. He also noted that with cafeteria funding the NRC may see more submittals under a consolidated owners group. However, Mr. Bernier noted that there is a debate whether there will more submittals to the NRC. Mr. Bernier highlighted that the CEOG expects to submit 5 reports for NRC review in 2002. Mr. Bernier identified the reports currently under review including reports on RCP seal modeling, Common Q platform, risk-informed change on technical specification shutdown conditions, and containment integrated leak rate testing interval extension. Mr. Bernier also reviewed the planned topical reports and their submittal dates. Mr. Strosnider, Director, Division of Engineering, stated that understanding the CEOG planned topical report submittals a couple years in advance helps the NRC with its resource planning. Mr. Strosnider also noted that identifying review priority (licensee need) and tying the review to the four NRC performance goals could help establish the review priorities. The CEOG agreed to keep the staff informed on its plans for future topical report submittals so that the NRC can budget its resources to support the topical report reviews (Action item 1). Mr. Bernier also reviewed the CEOG strategic technical issues and noted that risk-informed applications has been added to the strategic issue list.

The NRC commented that it was good to see the CEOG taking the initiative and working on SG risk issues such as thermally-induced steam generator tube ruptures. The NRC noted that utilities should expect to have more interaction with NRC on small primary-to-secondary leakage in order to maintain safety and increase public confidence on SG tube degradation

issues. On sump strainer issues, the NRC noted that plant specific analysis is needed to resolve the issue. No generic letter is planned at this time and the NRC will work with the Nuclear Energy Institute (NEI) on the sump strainer issue as a first step. Generic communications may be issued by the NRC on control room habitability which asks licensees to demonstrate compliance with licensing basis using contemporary testing methods. The NRC will be working with NEI on the issue.

Materials Report

Mr. Hardies covered RVH cracking issues. Mr. Hardies reviewed the latest inspection results for CEOG plants noting that no leaks have been found and that two axial cracks in sleeves have been repaired. Mr. Hardies also reviewed a histogram of inspection results. The inspection results still indicate a lower susceptibility for CEOG plants but more data is needed. Mr. Hardies emphasized that inspections are necessary and that the CEOG will learn a great deal more about the RVH nozzle cracking issue following the Spring inspections. The NRC noted they are finalizing their action plan on the issues and would like to ensure that industry actions match up with the plan. The NRC will be dealing with individual plants until the plan is in place. The NRC encourages advances in new inspection/repair methods but noted it is a burden on NRC resources. The NRC may not be able to review the new techniques in a very short time period in support of immediate outages. Therefore, utilities may need to have contingency plans to use already approved methods/repair techniques. The NRC highlighted that the risk-informed decisionmaking process used for DC Cook and Davis Besse was a new experience for the NRC using RG 1.174, "An Approach for Using Probabilistic Risk Assessment in Risk-Informed Decisions on Plant-Specific Changes to the Licensing Basis."

Mr. Hardies also discussed transgranular stress cracking corrosion (TGSCC) and its applicability to other pressurized water reactors. The Owners Groups are dealing with the issue and evaluating leak susceptibility. Mr. Hardies also discussed the work to gather previous TGSCC experience as a basis to work from and to identify key common factors. Mr. Hardies reviewed the Palisades root cause. The NRC encouraged working the issues through Owners Groups and industry initiatives which is more efficient than using the NRC generic communication process. The NRC noted that it is important to stay on schedule with the initiatives to maintain public confidence.

Probabilistic Safety Assessment (PSA) Initiatives

Mr. Hackerott reviewed the history of the RITS initiative within the CEOG. Mr. Hackerott noted the CEOG Joint Applications Report and cross comparison process has improved the quality and scope of the CEOG members' PSAs. Mr. Hackerott noted the NRC has been supporting the PSA subcommittee meetings which has been helpful in identifying issues for resolution. Mr. Hackerott discussed the work the CEOG is doing on the flexible allowed outage time (AOT) concept and reviewed the approach being used. Mr. Hackerott also reviewed the cooperation between the WOG and CEOG on PSA modeling issues. The NRC noted a need to converge on the PSA models the NRC is using and those being used by the licensees. Mr. Collins stated that risk informing the technical specifications is a positive development. Mr. Collins stated that he would like the next meeting to focus on the issues, concepts and planning required to proceed with risk-informing the technical specifications. The impact of these changes will affect

more than just the control room operators. The potential impacts on other groups, both within the plant and the NRC, need to be addressed.

Public Participation

The meeting was opened for public participation and the staff asked if anyone from the public had any questions or comments. There were no comments from the public.

Closing

The actions items were discussed and one item was identified regarding the CEOG keeping the NRC informed of its plans for submitting topical reports. Mr. Collins thanked the CEOG for their time. The next meeting was scheduled for November 14, 2002, from 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at the NRC headquarters.

Project No. 692

Attachment: Meeting Attendees

cc w/att: See next page

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ATTENDANCE LIST

MEETING WITH COMBUSTION ENGINEERING OWNERS GROUP (CEOG)

MARCH 5, 2002

CEOG

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Garry Gates
Bob Hughes
Alan Price
Bob Hardies
Charlie Cruse
Alan Hackerott
Ralph Phelps
A. Scherer
Richard Bernier
Douglas Cooper

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Rick Etling
Nick Liparulo
Gordon Bischoff
Stephen Lurie
Philip Richardson
Charlie Brinkman
Paul Hijeck

NEI

Tony Pietrangelo
Biff Bradley

NRC

Sam Collins
Brian Sheron
Jack Strosnider
Jack Cushing
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Kathleen O'Donohue
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Project No. 692

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