



UNITED STATES  
**NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION**  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

DRAFT

Mr. Guy G. Campbell, Vice President - Nuclear  
FirstEnergy Nuclear Operating Company  
5501 North State, Route 2  
Oak Harbor, OH 43449-9760

SUBJECT: DAVIS-BESSE NUCLEAR POWER STATION, UNIT 1 - ISSUANCE OF ORDER  
RE: RESPONSES TO BULLETIN 2001-01, "CIRCUMFERENTIAL CRACKING OF  
REACTOR PRESSURE VESSEL HEAD PENETRATION NOZZLES," (TAC NO.  
MB2626)

Dear Mr. Campbell:

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) staff issued Bulletin 2001-01, "Circumferential Cracking of Reactor Pressure Vessel Head Penetration Nozzles," on August 3, 2001, to address the generic safety implications of pressure boundary leakage recently observed at several facilities due to circumferential cracking of vessel head penetration (VHP) nozzles resulting from primary water stress corrosion cracking. In the Bulletin, the NRC staff recommended timely performance of a qualified visual examination of 100 percent of the VHP nozzles for those plants that have already identified existence of primary water stress corrosion cracking of VHP nozzles. To assess the prevalence and severity of VHP nozzle cracking and determine plant-specific compliance with NRC regulations, the NRC staff requested that addressees submit information regarding the scope, timing, and results of completed inspections and the scope and schedule of future inspections of their VHP nozzles. The Bulletin requested that licensees not planning to perform inspections prior to December 31, 2001, provide a technical basis for their planned inspection schedules. At the time of issuance of the Bulletin, the staff considered that performance of the recommended inspections by December 31, 2001, was a timely action given the very limited knowledge, experience, and observations regarding this cracking phenomenon and the associated safety implications. December 31, 2001, was chosen based on the need to acquire additional information in a timely manner and to allow licensees time to plan and perform the recommended inspections, and to make needed repairs.

Since issuance of the Bulletin, the importance of performing the recommended inspections by this date to support continued operation has been reinforced by the identification of VHP nozzle cracking, including circumferential cracking, at several facilities. While the results of these inspections have not revealed conditions of incipient failure, the inspections have identified conditions supporting the need to perform inspections in the near term to verify the absence of conditions worse than those found to date. In light of these results, the staff believes that operation of facilities, that are considered to be highly susceptible to this cracking phenomenon or that have already experienced VHP nozzle cracking, beyond December 31, 2001, is unacceptable unless the recommended inspections to identify this potentially hazardous condition are completed and found acceptable by the NRC staff.

You provided your response to the Bulletin by letters dated September 4, October 17, October 30, and November 1, 2001. These letters documented the "high susceptibility" ranking of Davis-Besse Nuclear Power Station, Unit No. 1., and described your basis for deferral of

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performance of the VHP inspections until you shutdown for the next refueling outage on March 31, 2001.

Based on the information provided in your responses, you have not, at any time, performed a qualified visual examination of 100 percent of the VHP nozzles at Donald C. Cook Nuclear Plant, Unit 2. In addition, the plant is ranked as having a high susceptibility to cracking in the VHP nozzles. Due to this high susceptibility and the extent of cracking found in other plants, it is reasonable to expect that Davis-Besse Nuclear Power Station, Unit No. 1, could have significant cracking, which would violate the reactor coolant pressure boundary and result in a loss-of-coolant accident. You have not provided an adequate basis to operate beyond December 31, 2001, without performing inspections to verify the integrity of the reactor coolant pressure boundary. Consequently, I find that a potentially hazardous condition exists and warrants the issuance of the attached Order that modifies the operating license for Davis-Besse Nuclear Power Station, Unit No. 1, to require (1) that the facility be shut down by December 31, 2001, and proceed to the cold shutdown or lower mode, and (2) the performance of inspections to demonstrate to the NRC staff that there is reasonable assurance that the VHP nozzles are free of significant defects prior to subsequent plant operation. I further find that the assurance of public health and safety requires that this Order be effective immediately.

Sincerely,

Samuel J. Collins, Director  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket No. 50-346

Enclosures: Order Modifying License No. NPF-3

cc w/encls: See next page

Mr. Guy G. Campbell  
FirstEnergy Nuclear Operating Company

Davis-Besse Nuclear Power Station, Unit 1

cc:

Mary E. O'Reilly  
FirstEnergy  
76 South Main Street  
Akron, OH 44308

Harvey B. Brugger, Supervisor  
Radiological Assistance Section  
Bureau of Radiation Protection  
Ohio Department of Health  
P.O. Box 118  
Columbus, OH 43266-0118

Manager - Regulatory Affairs  
FirstEnergy Nuclear Operating Company  
Davis-Besse Nuclear Power Station  
5501 North State - Route 2  
Oak Harbor, OH 43449-9760

Carol O'Claire, Chief, Radiological Branch  
Ohio Emergency Management Agency  
2855 West Dublin Granville Road  
Columbus, OH 43235-2206

Jay E. Silberg, Esq.  
Shaw, Pittman, Potts  
and Trowbridge  
2300 N Street, NW.  
Washington, DC 20037

Director  
Ohio Department of Commerce  
Division of Industrial Compliance  
Bureau of Operations & Maintenance  
6606 Tussing Road  
P.O. Box 4009  
Reynoldsburg, OH 43068-9009

Regional Administrator  
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
801 Warrenville Road  
Lisle, IL 60523-4351

Ohio Environmental Protection Agency  
DERR--Compliance Unit  
ATTN: Zack A. Clayton  
P.O. Box 1049  
Columbus, OH 43266-0149

Michael A. Schoppman  
Framatome Technologies Incorporated  
1700 Rockville Pike, Suite 525  
Rockville, MD 20852

State of Ohio  
Public Utilities Commission  
180 East Broad Street  
Columbus, OH 43266-0573

Resident Inspector  
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
5503 North State Route 2  
Oak Harbor, OH 43449-9760

Attorney General  
Department of Attorney  
30 East Broad Street  
Columbus, OH 43216

Plant Manager  
FirstEnergy Nuclear Operating Company  
Davis-Besse Nuclear Power Station  
5501 North State - Route 2  
Oak Harbor, OH 43449-9760

President, Board of County  
Commissioners of Ottawa County  
Port Clinton, OH 43252

performance of the VHP inspections until you shutdown for the next refueling outage on March 31, 2001.

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Sincerely,

Stephen P. Sands, Project Manager, Section 2  
Project Directorate III  
Division of Licensing Project Management  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket No. 50-346

Enclosures: Order Modifying License No. NPF-3

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