

November 8, 2002

Mr. G. R. Peterson  
Site Vice President  
Catawba Nuclear Station  
Duke Energy Corporation  
4800 Concord Road  
York, South Carolina 29745-9635

SUBJECT: CATAWBA NUCLEAR STATION, UNIT 2 - RESPONSE TO NRC BULLETIN 2002-02, "REACTOR PRESSURE VESSEL HEAD AND VESSEL HEAD PENETRATION NOZZLE INSPECTION PROGRAMS" (TAC NO. MB5882)

Dear Mr. Peterson:

On August 9, 2002, the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) issued Bulletin 2002-02, "Reactor Pressure Vessel Head and Vessel Head Penetration Nozzle Inspection Programs." The Bulletin requested addressees to provide information related to their reactor pressure vessel (RPV) head and vessel head penetration (VHP) nozzle inspection programs for their respective facilities, including a summary discussion of inspection program plans to supplement their required visual inspections with non-visual nondestructive examination methods, or justification for reliance on visual examinations as the primary method to detect degradation. Addressees were requested to respond to Item 1 of the Bulletin within 30 days of its issuance, or within 15 days of its issuance, to provide an alternative course of action, including the basis for acceptability of the proposed action.

By letter dated September 6, 2002, Duke Energy Corporation provided a response to Item 1 of the Bulletin, indicating the plans to perform RPV head and VHP nozzle inspections at the Catawba Nuclear Station, Unit 2. The response also indicated that the Catawba Nuclear Station, Unit 2, is in the category of plants considered to have low susceptibility to RPV head and VHP cracking, based on a susceptibility ranking of less than 8 effective degradation years.

The NRC staff has reviewed your response to Item 1 of the Bulletin. The staff finds your immediate inspection plan to perform a 100 percent bare metal visual examination during the March 2003 refueling outage to be adequate for providing reasonable assurance that existing regulatory requirements will be met.

The staff notes that you indicated you will provide your future inspection plans within 4 years of the date of your response to Bulletin 2002-02. You are requested to provide your future inspection plans no later than 90 days prior to the refueling outage following the March 2003 outage. The staff's assessment of the adequacy of your long-term inspection program will be determined upon completion of a review at that time.

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Also, please note that as stated in Item 2 of the Bulletin, you are to report to the Commission your inspection scope and results within 30 days after plant restart following the inspection of the RPV head and VHP nozzles.

Please contact me at (301) 415-3025 if you have any questions on this issue.

Sincerely,

***/RA/***

Chandu P. Patel, Project Manager, Section 1  
Project Directorate II  
Division of Licensing Project Management  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket No. 50-414

cc: See next page

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G. R. Peterson

Catawba Nuclear Station

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