

December 2, 2002

Mr. John L. Skolds, President
Exelon Nuclear
Exelon Generation Company, LLC
4300 Winfield Road
Warrenville, IL 60555

SUBJECT: BRAIDWOOD STATION, UNITS 1 AND 2 - RESPONSE TO NRC BULLETIN 2002-02, "REACTOR PRESSURE VESSEL HEAD AND VESSEL HEAD PENETRATION NOZZLE INSPECTION PROGRAMS" (TAC NOS. MB5874 AND MB5875)

Dear Mr. Skolds:

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 11, 2002, Exelon Generation Company, LLC (Exelon) provided a response to Item 1 of the Bulletin, indicating the plans to perform RPV head and VHP nozzle inspections at Braidwood Station, Units 1 and 2. The response also indicated that Braidwood Station, Units 1 and 2 are in the category of plants considered to have low susceptibility to RPV head and VHP cracking, based on a susceptibility ranking of less than eight 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 April 2003 Braidwood Station, Unit 1 outage and the 100 percent bare metal visual examination completed in April 2002 at Braidwood Station, Unit 2, to provide reasonable assurance of adequate protection of public health and safety.

The staff notes that your justification for reliance on visual examinations and long-term inspection plans refer to the Electric Power Research Institute Materials Reliability Program (MRP) inspection plan for pressurized-water reactor RPV upper head penetrations. The staff has not completed its review of the MRP inspection plan and, as such, has not made a determination on the adequacy of the plan for ensuring applicable regulatory requirements are met. The staff's assessment of your justification and the adequacy of your long-term inspection program plans will be determined upon completion of the staff's review of the MRP inspection plan.

John L. Skolds

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Also, please note that as stated in Item 2 of Bulletin 2002-02, you are to report your inspection scope and results to the Commission within 30 days after plant restart following the inspection of the RPV head and VHP nozzles. The staff finds your report submitted in response to Item 2.A of Bulletin 2002-01 for Braidwood Station, Unit 2, satisfies the report requested in Item 2 of Bulletin 2002-02.

Please contact me at (301) 415-8371 if you have any questions on this issue.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Mahesh Chawla, Project Manager, Section 2
Project Directorate III
Division of Licensing Project Management
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket No. STN 50-456 and STN 50-457

cc: See next page

Braidwood Station Units 1 and 2

cc:

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John L. Skolds

-2-

Also, please note that as stated in Item 2 of Bulletin 2002-02, you are to report your inspection scope and results to the Commission within 30 days after plant restart following the inspection of the RPV head and VHP nozzles. The staff finds your report submitted in response to Item 2.A of Bulletin 2002-01 for Braidwood Station, Unit 2, satisfies the report requested in Item 2 of Bulletin 2002-02.

Please contact me at (301) 415-8371 if you have any questions on this issue.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Mahesh Chawla, Project Manager, Section 2
Project Directorate 3
Division of Licensing Project Management
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket No. STN 50-456 and STN 50-457

cc: See next page

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