

November 22, 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 1- RESPONSE TO NRC BULLETIN
2002-02, "REACTOR PRESSURE VESSEL HEAD AND VESSEL HEAD
PENETRATION NOZZLE INSPECTION PROGRAMS" (TAC NO. MB5881)

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 1. The response also indicated that Catawba Nuclear Station, Unit 1 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 the 100 percent bare metal visual examination conducted on May 4, 2002, to provide reasonable assurance of adequate protection of public health and safety.

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 start of the refueling outage following the Spring 2002 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.

Item 2 of the Bulletin requested that you report to the Commission your inspection scope and results within 30 days after plant restart following the inspections of the RPV head and VHP nozzles. The staff finds your report submitted in response to Item 2.A of Bulletin 2002-01 satisfies the report requested in Item 2 of Bulletin 2002-02.

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. 50-413

cc: See next page

November 22, 2002

Item 2 of the Bulletin requested that you report to the Commission your inspection scope and results within 30 days after plant restart following the inspections of the RPV head and VHP nozzles. The staff finds your report submitted in response to Item 2.A of Bulletin 2002-01 satisfies the report requested in Item 2 of Bulletin 2002-02.

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

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