

November 22, 2002

Mr. Harold W. Keiser
Chief Nuclear Officer & President
PSEG Nuclear LLC - X04
Post Office Box 236
Hancocks Bridge, NJ 08038

SUBJECT: HOPE CREEK GENERATING STATION - REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL
INFORMATION REGARDING INTEGRATED LEAK RATE TEST INTERVAL
EXTENSION (TAC NO. MB6551)

Dear Mr. Keiser:

By letter dated October 9, 2002, PSEG Nuclear, LLC requested an amendment that would allow a one-time extension of the Integrated Leak Rate Test (ILRT) interval for the Hope Creek Generating Station, Unit No. 1. The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) staff has begun its review of the proposed change and requests that you answer the enclosed questions regarding your submittal. These questions were discussed with Mr. Mike Mosier and other members of your staff in a telephone call on November 21, 2002.

Your October 9, 2002, amendment request asks for the ILRT test interval to be extended from 10 to 20 years. Following an initial review by the technical staff I called Mr. Nagle on or about November 7, 2002, and stated that it was unlikely that we could grant such a request; I informed him that the NRC staff considered an extension to 15 years much more reasonable. As a result of this conversation, Mr. Nagle stated that PSEG Nuclear, LLC would modify the amendment request accordingly and ask for an extension of the ILRT interval to 15 years. I understand that I should have this modified request in a matter of days.

In your October 9, 2002, request you asked that the amendment be issued in time to support your spring 2003 outage. Please note that ILRT interval extensions are technically complex and require review by experts from several branches of the NRC staff. Many reviews have taken 6 to 7 months to complete. While the NRC staff will make every effort to meet your requested date, we cannot assure you that the amendment will be issued in time to support your outage.

H. Keiser

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In order that we may complete our review in a timely manner we understand that you intend to submit your response to the enclosed request for additional information within 15 days of the date of this letter. If any of the information above is incorrect or if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call. I can be reached at (301) 415-1494.

Sincerely,

/RA/

George F. Wunder, Project Manager, Section 2
Project Directorate I
Division of Licensing Project Management
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket No. 50-354

Enclosure: As stated

cc w/encl: See next page

H. Keiser

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Hope Creek Generating Station

cc:

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Hancocks Bridge, NJ 08038

REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

REGARDING REQUEST FOR INTEGRATED LEAK RATE TEST INTERVAL EXTENSION

HOPE CREEK GENERATING STATION UNIT NO. 1

DOCKET NO. 50-354

Question 1: Your request for amendment dated October 9, 2002, does not describe the containment Inservice Inspection (ISI) program being implemented at Hope Creek Unit 1. Please provide a description of the ISI methods (with Code Edition and addenda) that provide assurance that in the absence of an Integrated Leak Rate Test (ILRT) for 15 years, the containment structural and leak tight integrity will be maintained. Also provide start and completion dates of the first IWE and IWL examinations performed as required by 10CFR50.55a, and a schedule for conducting the future examinations.

Question 2: IWE-1240 requires licensees to identify the surface areas requiring augmented examinations. Please provide the NRC staff with the list of the areas (such as shell near sand cushion areas and vertical portions of the drywell) identified for augmented examination and a summary of examinations performed.

Question 3: For the examination of seals and gaskets, and examination and testing of bolts associated with the primary containment pressure boundary (examination categories E-D and E-G, IWE-1992), you have previously requested relief from the IWE-1992; this relief was authorized by NRC letter dated June 6, 2000. As an alternative, to IWE-1992 you planned to examine these components during leak rate testing of the primary containment. With the flexibility provided in Option B of Appendix J for Type B and Type C testing, and the extension requested in this amendment for Type A testing, please provide the schedule for examination and testing of seals, gaskets, and bolts that provide assurance of the integrity of the containment pressure boundary.

Question 4: The stainless steel bellows have been found to be susceptible to trans-granular stress corrosion cracking, and leakages through them are not readily detectable by Type B testing (see NRC Information Notice 92-20, "Inadequate Local Leak Rate Testing"). In general, boiling water reactor Mark I primary containments have bellows on the vent lines between the drywell and the torus, as well as on several process piping penetrations in the drywell. If degraded, the bellows could allow the drywell steam and air to bypass the suppression pool during loss-of-coolant accidents and core damage accidents. Please provide information regarding inspection and testing of the bellows at Hope Creek.

Question 5: Inspections of some reinforced and steel containments (e.g., North Anna, Brunswick, D. C. Cook, and Oyster Creek), have indicated degradation from the uninspectable side of the steel shell and liner of primary containments. The major uninspectable areas of the Mark I containment are the vertical portion of the drywell shell and part of the shell sandwiched between the drywell floor and the basemat. Please discuss what programs are used to monitor their condition. Also, address how potential leakage due to age related degradation from these uninspectable areas is factored into the risk assessment in support of the requested ILRT interval extension.

Enclosure