

December 20, 2002

Mr. J. A. Scalice
Chief Nuclear Officer and
Executive Vice President
Tennessee Valley Authority
6A Lookout Place
1101 Market Street
Chattanooga, TN 37402-2801

SUBJECT: WATTS BAR, UNIT 1 — RESPONSE TO NRC BULLETIN 2002-02, "REACTOR PRESSURE VESSEL HEAD AND VESSEL HEAD PENETRATION NOZZLE INSPECTION PROGRAMS" (TAC. NO. MB5937)

Dear Mr. Scalice:

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. The information was to include a summary discussion of inspection program plans to supplement their required visual inspections with nonvisual 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.

Tennessee Valley Authority's letter of September 11, 2002, responded to Item (1) of the Bulletin, indicating the plans to perform RPV head and VHP nozzle inspections at Watts Bar, Unit 1. Your response also indicated that Watts Bar, 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 your immediate inspection plan to perform a 100-percent bare-metal visual examination during the fall 2003 refueling outage to provide reasonable assurance of adequate protection of public health and safety.

The staff notes that your justification for relying 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 program 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 proposed inspection plan.

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) 415-1423 if you have any questions on this issue.

Sincerely,

/RA/

L. Mark Padovan, Project Manager, Section 2
Project Directorate II
Division of Licensing Project Management
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket No. 50-390

cc: See next page

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Mr. J. A. Scalice
Tennessee Valley Authority

WATTS BAR NUCLEAR PLANT

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