

Mr. Craig G. Anderson
Vice President, Operations ANO
Entergy Operations, Inc.
1448 S. R. 333
Russellville, AR 72801

December 24, 2002

SUBJECT: BULLETIN 2002-02, "REACTOR PRESSURE VESSEL HEAD AND VESSEL HEAD PENETRATION NOZZLE INSPECTION PROGRAMS," RESPONSE FOR ARKANSAS NUCLEAR ONE, UNIT 1 (TAC NO. MB5870)

Dear Mr. Anderson:

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 (NDE) 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 9, 2002, Entergy Operations, Inc. (Entergy) provided a response to Item (1) of Bulletin 2002-02, indicating the plans to perform RPV head and VHP nozzle inspections at Arkansas Nuclear One, Unit 1 (ANO-1). The response also indicated that ANO-1 is in the category of plants considered to have high susceptibility to RPV head and VHP cracking, based on a susceptibility ranking of greater than 12 effective degradation years. In a supplemental letter dated October 31, 2002, Entergy addressed the scope of the planned inspection and the impact of recent industry inspection findings on the inspection plans provided in response to Item (1).

The NRC staff has reviewed Entergy's response to Item (1) of the Bulletin and the supplement dated October 31, 2002, in which the commitment was made to perform a bare metal visual examination of the RPV head and a volumetric NDE of all of the VHP nozzles during the fall 2002 refueling outage for ANO-1. The NRC staff finds the combination of NDE methods performed during that refueling outage is sufficient to demonstrate compliance with applicable regulatory requirements and adequate to provide reasonable assurance of the protection of public health and safety, if implemented properly with qualified and demonstrated equipment, personnel, and procedures.

The NRC staff notes that Entergy stated that the frequency of future examinations will be determined at a later date based on inspection findings from the fall 2002 refueling outage and other industry information, and therefore did not provide all of the information requested in Item (1) of the Bulletin within 30 days of its issuance. The NRC requests that the summary description of its inspection program requested in Item (1), be provided no later than 90 days

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prior to the start of the refueling outage following the fall 2002 outage, in lieu of the 30 days from the date of issuance of Bulletin 2002-02. The NRC staff's assessment of the adequacy of the inspection program for ANO-1 will be determined upon completion of a review at that time. Once completed, the NRC staff will initiate further discussions as warranted.

Please contact me at (301) 415-1326 if you have any questions on this issue.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Thomas W. Alexion, Project Manager, Section 1
Project Directorate IV
Division of Licensing Project Management
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket No. 50-313

cc: See next page

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Arkansas Nuclear One

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