

April 1, 2003

Mr. Michael Kansler  
Senior Vice President and Chief  
Operating Officer  
Entergy Nuclear Operations, Inc.  
440 Hamilton Avenue  
White Plains, NY 10601

SUBJECT: JAMES A. FITZPATRICK NUCLEAR POWER PLANT - THIRD 10-YEAR PUMP  
AND VALVE INSERVICE TESTING PROGRAM - REVISION OF RELIEF  
REQUEST VRR-04 (TAC NO. MB6901)

Dear Mr. Kansler:

By letter dated November 12, 2002, Entergy Nuclear Operations, Inc. (ENO) submitted a proposed revision to Relief Request VRR-04, under the third ten-year pump and valve inservice testing (IST) program for the James A. FitzPatrick Nuclear Power Plant (JAFNPP). VRR-04 was previously approved for the Third Interval IST Program and requires that check valves 23HPI-402 and 23HPI-403 "will be exercised open and the pair (at least one valve) will be verified to close during cold shutdown and each refueling outage." The proposed revision (VRR-04R1) would delete the words "during cold shutdown" from the Alternate Testing identified in the relief request making this a refueling outage test only. The Alternate Testing cited in VRR-04 requires the installation of special test equipment such that, in practice, the tests are normally only performed during the extended duration of a refueling outage.

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) staff has completed its review of the proposed relief request. The results are provided in the enclosed Safety Evaluation. Based on its review, the NRC staff concludes that ENO's compliance with the exercising tests required by Relief Request VRR-04 for check valves 23HPI-402 and 23HPI-403 would result in hardship or unusual difficulty without a compensating increase in the level of quality and safety. On this basis, the proposed alternative, described in VRR-04R1, is authorized for the James A. FitzPatrick Plant pursuant to 10 CFR 50.55a(a)(3)(ii) for the third 10-year IST interval.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call Mr. Guy S. Vissing, Senior Project Manager, at 301-415-1441.

Sincerely,

*/RA/*

Richard J. Laufer, Chief, Section 1  
Project Directorate I  
Division of Licensing Project Management  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket No. 50-333

Enclosure: Safety Evaluation

cc w/encl: See next page

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\*SE transmitted by letter dated 01/29/03, no changes made

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SAFETY EVALUATION BY THE OFFICE OF NUCLEAR REACTOR REGULATION  
RELATED TO THE INSERVICE TESTING PROGRAM, THIRD 10-YEAR INTERVAL  
ENTERGY NUCLEAR OPERATIONS, INC  
JAMES A. FITZPATRICK NUCLEAR POWER PLANT  
DOCKET NUMBER 50-333

1.0 INTRODUCTION

By letter dated November 12, 2002, Entergy Nuclear Operations, Inc. (the licensee) requested Relief Request VRR-04R1 to test check valves 23HPI-402 and 23HPI-403 during each refueling outage only. The proposed relief request would be a revision to previously approved Relief Request VRR-04 (Reference 1) which required the testing of these valves in series during cold shutdown and each refueling outage.

2.0 REGULATORY EVALUATION

Title 10 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (10 CFR), Section 50.55a, requires that inservice testing (IST) of certain American Society of Mechanical Engineers Boiler Pressure and Vessel Code (ASME Code) Class 1, 2, and 3 pumps and valves be performed at 120-month (10-year) IST program intervals in accordance with a specified ASME Code and applicable addenda, except where alternatives have been authorized or relief has been requested by the licensee and granted by the NRC pursuant to paragraphs (a)(3)(i), (a)(3)(ii), or (f)(6)(i) of 10 CFR 50.55a. In accordance with 10 CFR 50.55a(f)(4)(ii), licensees are required to comply with the requirements of the latest edition and addenda of the ASME Code incorporated by reference in the regulations 12 months prior to the start of the 120-month IST program. James A. FitzPatrick's third 10-year IST interval is based on the 1989 Edition of the *ASME Code for Operation and Maintenance of Nuclear Power Plants* (ASME OM Code). In proposing alternatives or requesting relief, the licensee must demonstrate that (1) the proposed alternatives provide an acceptable level of quality and safety, (2) compliance would result in hardship or unusual difficulty without a compensating increase in the level of quality and safety, or (3) conformance is impractical for the facility. Section 50.55a authorizes the NRC to approve alternatives and grant relief from ASME Code requirements upon making the necessary findings. NRC guidance in Generic Letter (GL) 89-04, "Guidance on Developing Acceptable Inservice Testing Program," provides acceptable alternatives to the Code requirements. Further guidance is given in GL 89-04, Supplement 1, and NUREG-1482, "Guidelines for Inservice Testing at Nuclear Power Plants."

Enclosure

### 3.0 TECHNICAL EVALUATION

#### 3.1 Code Requirements

Relief Request VRR-04, approved for the third 10-year interval James A. Fitzpatrick Nuclear Power Plant (JAFNPP) IST Program (Reference 1), states that check valves 23HPI-402 and 23HPI-403 will be exercised open and the pair (at least one valve) will be verified to close during cold shutdown and each refueling outage.

#### 3.2 Licensee's Basis for Requesting Relief: As stated

VRR-04, approved for the Third Interval JAFNPP IST Program, currently states that [the subject valves] "will be exercised open and the pair (at least one valve) will be verified to close during cold shutdown and each refueling outage...." The Alternate Test cited in VRR-04 requires the installation of special test equipment such that in practice, the tests are normally only performed during the extended duration of a refueling outage, as permitted by applicable codes.

The proposed revision to VRR-04 deletes the words "during cold shutdown" from the Alternate Testing identified by the relief request, making this a refueling outage test. This change is consistent with the provisions of NUREG-1482, "Guidelines for Inservice Tests at Nuclear Power Plants," Section 4.1.4, which identifies the need to set up test equipment as adequate justification for deferring testing of this type until a refueling outage.

#### 3.3 Licensee's Proposed Alternative to Code Testing Requirement: As stated

Check valves 23HPI-402 and 23HPI-403 would be tested during each refueling outage.

#### 3.4 Staff Evaluation

Valves 23HPI-402 and 23HPI-403 are ASME Code Class 2, Category C, high-pressure coolant injection (HPCI) turbine exhaust line check valves. These valves open to eliminate any differential pressure that could force water from the suppression chamber into the HPCI exhaust piping when the suppression chamber pressure is greater than atmospheric. They close to prevent HPCI exhaust steam from entering the suppression chamber air space, thus bypassing the quenching action of the suppression pool. Approved Relief Request VRR-04 (Reference 1) stated that check valves 23HPI-402 and 23HPI-403 will be exercised open and the pair (at least one valve) will be verified to close during cold shutdown and each refueling outage. Testing of these check valves requires the installation and removal of test equipment that could delay plant startup. The ASME OM Code recognizes the limitations of performing testing during power operations and cold shutdown and allows testing to be performed during refueling outages for those valves which cannot be practically exercised otherwise. The position to allow deferral of testing to refueling outages when installation and removal of test equipment is needed is consistent with NRC staff guidelines in NUREG-1482, Section 4.1.4.

#### 4.0 CONCLUSION

Based on its review of information provided by the licensee, the staff concludes that the licensee's compliance with the Alternate Test cited in relief request VRR-04 for check valves 23HPI-402 and 23HPI-403 during cold shutdown would result in hardship or unusual difficulty without a compensating increase in the level of quality and safety. On this basis, the licensee's proposed alternative, described in VRR-04R1, is authorized pursuant to 10 CFR 50.55a(a)(3)(ii) for the third 10-year IST interval for the JAFNPP.

#### 5.0 REFERENCE

Letter from S. Bajwa, NRC to J. Knubel, "James A. FitzPatrick Nuclear Power Plant - Third Interval Inservice Testing Program and Relief Results," dated November 17, 1998.

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Date: April 1, 2003

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