

July 2, 2003

Mr. David Lochbaum
Nuclear Safety Engineer
Union of Concerned Scientists
1707 H Street NW, Suite 600
Washington, DC 20006-3919

Dear Mr. Lochbaum:

Your petition dated May 30, 2003, on behalf of the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS), and addressed to Dr. William D. Travers, the Executive Director for Operations, has been referred to me pursuant to Title 10 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (10 CFR) Section 2.206 of the Commission's regulations. You requested that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) take enforcement action against the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), the licensee for the Watts Bar Nuclear Plant, in the form of a Demand for Information. Specifically, you requested that TVA be required to provide specific information on the possible corrosion of the reactor coolant pressure boundary at Watts Bar due to the existence of defects in the stainless steel cladding applied to the interior surface of the carbon steel reactor pressure vessel. The cladding provides corrosion resistance against the borated water used as a reactor coolant. You also requested that the NRC (a) provide UCS with copies of all correspondence sent to TVA regarding this petition and the subject cladding defects at Watts Bar, (b) provide UCS with advance notice of all public meetings conducted by the agency with TVA regarding this petition and the subject cladding defects, (c) provide UCS with an opportunity to participate in all relevant phone calls between NRC staff and TVA regarding this petition and the subject cladding defects at Watts Bar, and (d) provide UCS with copies of all correspondence sent to Members of Congress and/or industry organizations (e.g., the Nuclear Energy Institute, the Electric Power Research Institute, the Institute for Nuclear Power Operations, etc.).

As the basis for your request, you cited NRC's original Safety Evaluation Report issued in 1982, and you stated that the NRC accepted the defects in the stainless steel cladding on the cold leg nozzles of the Watts Bar reactor pressure vessel. In contrast, you also stated that when defects were discovered in the stainless steel cladding of a safety injection accumulator tank, in 1993, it was not deemed permissible to leave them "as-is." Furthermore, you noted that the NRC issued two bulletins: Bulletin 2001-01, "Circumferential Cracking of Reactor Pressure Head Penetration Nozzles," dated August 3, 2001, requiring all pressurized-water reactor (PWR) licensees to supply information on the control rod drive mechanism nozzles; and Bulletin 2002-02, "Reactor Pressure Vessel Head and Vessel Head Penetration Nozzles Inspection Programs," dated August 9, 2002, requiring all PWR licensees to undertake inspections of reactor coolant pressure boundary components and provide information to NRC.

You verbally declined the opportunity to address our Petition Review Board (PRB) concerning your petition. The PRB has determined that your request will be treated pursuant to 10 CFR 2.206 of the Commission's regulations. Your petition did not contain a request for immediate action.

As provided by 10 CFR 2.206, we will take action on your request within a reasonable time. I have assigned Ms. Margaret Chernoff to be the petition manager for your petition.

Ms. Chernoff can be reached at 301-415-4041 (e-mail: mhc@nrc.gov). Your petition is being reviewed by the Division of Engineering in the Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation. I have enclosed for your information a copy of the notice that is being filed with the Office of the Federal Register for publication.

I have also enclosed for your information a copy of Management Directive 8.11, "Review Process for 10 CFR 2.206 Petitions," and the associated brochure NUREG/BR-0200, "Public Petition Process," prepared by the NRC Office of Public Affairs.

I appreciate your effort in bringing these matters to the attention of the NRC.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Samuel J. Collins, Director
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Enclosures:

1. *Federal Register* Notice
2. Management Directive 8.11
3. NUREG/BR-0200

cc w/encls: See next page

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I appreciate your effort in bringing these matters to the attention of the NRC.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Samuel J. Collins, Director
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

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1. *Federal Register* Notice
2. Management Directive 8.11
3. NUREG/BR-0200

cc w/encls: See next page

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Tennessee Valley Authority

WATTS BAR NUCLEAR PLANT

cc:

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

Mr. Karl W. Singer, Senior Vice President
Nuclear Operations
Tennessee Valley Authority
6A Lookout Place
1101 Market Street
Chattanooga, TN 37402-2801

Mr. James E. Maddox, Vice President
Engineering & Technical
Tennessee Valley Authority
6A Lookout Place
1101 Market Street
Chattanooga, TN 37402-2801

Mr. William R. Lagergren, Site Vice President
Watts Bar Nuclear Plant
Tennessee Valley Authority
P.O. Box 2000
Spring City, TN 37381

General Counsel
Tennessee Valley Authority
ET 11A
400 West Summit Hill Drive
Knoxville, TN 37902

Mr. Robert J. Adney, General Manager
Nuclear Assurance
Tennessee Valley Authority
6A Lookout Place
1101 Market Street
Chattanooga, TN 37402-2801

Mr. Mark J. Burzynski, Manager
Nuclear Licensing
Tennessee Valley Authority
4X Blue Ridge
1101 Market Street
Chattanooga, TN 37402-2801

Mr. Paul L. Pace, Manager
Licensing and Industry Affairs
Watts Bar Nuclear Plant
Tennessee Valley Authority
P.O. Box 2000
Spring City, TN 37381

Mr. Larry S. Bryant, Manager
Watts Bar Nuclear Plant
Tennessee Valley Authority
P.O. Box 2000
Spring City, TN 37381

Senior Resident Inspector
Watts Bar Nuclear Plant
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
1260 Nuclear Plant Road
Spring City, TN 37381

Rhea County Executive
375 Church Street
Suite 215
Dayton, TN 37321

County Executive
Meigs County Courthouse
Decatur, TN 37322

Mr. Lawrence E. Nanney, Director
Division of Radiological Health
Dept. of Environment & Conservation
Third Floor, L and C Annex
401 Church Street
Nashville, TN 37243-1532

Ms. Ann P. Harris
341 Swing Loop Road
Rockwood, Tennessee 37854

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSIONDOCKET NO. 50-390LICENSE NO. NPF-90TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITYRECEIPT OF REQUEST FOR ACTION UNDER 10 CFR 2.206

Notice is hereby given that by petition dated May 30, 2003, Mr. David Lochbaum (petitioner), on behalf of the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS), has requested that the NRC take action with regard to the Watts Bar Nuclear Plant. The petitioner requested that Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) be required to provide specific information relating to possible corrosion of the reactor coolant pressure boundary at the Watts Bar Nuclear Plant due to defects in the stainless steel cladding applied to the interior surface of the carbon steel reactor pressure vessel to provide corrosion resistance against the borated water used as reactor coolant. The petitioner also requested that the NRC (a) provide UCS with copies of all correspondence sent to TVA regarding this petition and the subject cladding defects at Watts Bar, (b) provide UCS with advance notice of all public meetings conducted by the agency with TVA regarding this petition and the subject cladding defects, (c) provide UCS with an opportunity to participate in all relevant phone calls between NRC staff and TVA regarding this petition and the subject cladding defects at Watts Bar, and (d) provide UCS with copies of all correspondence sent to Members of Congress and/or industry organizations (e.g., the Nuclear Energy Institute, the Electric Power Research Institute, the Institute for Nuclear Power Operations, etc.).

As the basis for this request, the petitioner states that in its original Safety Evaluation Report issued in 1982, the NRC accepted the defects in the stainless steel cladding on the cold leg nozzles of the Watts Bar reactor pressure vessel. In contrast, the petitioner states that when defects were discovered in the stainless steel cladding of safety injection accumulator

tank, in 1993, it was not deemed permissible to leave them "as-is." Furthermore, the petitioner noted that the NRC issued two bulletins: Bulletin 2001-01, "Circumferential Cracking of Reactor Pressure Head Penetration Nozzles," dated August 3, 2001, requiring all pressurized-water reactor (PWR) licensees to supply information on the control rod drive mechanism nozzles; and Bulletin 2002-02, "Reactor Pressure Vessel Head and Vessel Head Penetration Nozzles Inspection Programs," dated August 9, 2002, requiring all PWR licensees to undertake inspections of reactor coolant pressure boundary components and provide information to NRC.

The request is being handled in accordance with Title 10 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (10 CFR) Section 2.206 of the Commission's regulations. The request has been referred to the Director of the Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation. As provided by 10 CFR 2.206, appropriate action will be taken on this petition within a reasonable time. The petitioner did not request any immediate action at Watts Bar Nuclear Plant. A copy of the petition is available for inspection at the Commission's Public Document Room (PDR), located at One White Flint North, Public File Area O1 F21, 11555 Rockville Pike (first floor), Rockville, Maryland. Publicly available records will be accessible from the Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS) Public Electronic Reading Room on the Internet at the NRC Web site, <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html>. Persons who do not have access to ADAMS or who encounter problems in accessing the documents located in ADAMS should contact the NRC PDR reference staff by telephone at 1-800-397-4209 or 301-415-4737, or by e-mail to pdr@nrc.gov.

FOR THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

/RA/

Samuel J. Collins, Director
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Dated at Rockville, Maryland,
this 2nd day of July 2003.