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February 3, 2004

U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
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Subject: Oconee Nuclear Station, Unit 1  
Docket No. 50-269  
Response to NRC Bulletin 2003-02: "Leakage from Reactor Pressure  
Vessel Lower Head Penetrations and Reactor Coolant Pressure  
Boundary Integrity"

Pursuant to 10 CFR 50.54(f), this letter and Enclosure provide Duke Energy Corporation's (Duke) response to NRC Bulletin 2003-02, Item 2, for the Oconee Nuclear Station Unit 1 (ONS-1). This item requested that Duke provide within 60-days of unit restart, plant-specific information regarding the inspection results of the reactor pressure vessel lower head penetrations performed for ONS-1.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Stephen C. Newman, Oconee Regulatory Compliance Group, at (864) 885-4388.

Very truly yours,

R. A. Jones, Vice President  
Oconee Nuclear Station

ENCLOSURE

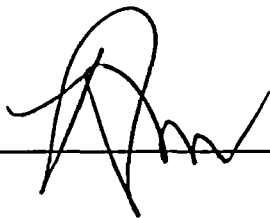
A109

cc: L. A. Reyes, Regional Administrator  
Region II

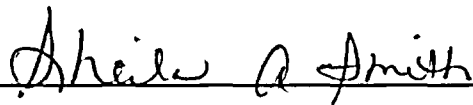
M. C. Shannon, Senior Resident Inspector  
Oconee Nuclear Station

Mr. L. N. Olshan, Project Manager  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

R. A. Jones, affirms that he is the person who subscribed his name to the foregoing statement, and that all the matters and facts set forth herein are true and correct to the best of his knowledge.

 \_\_\_\_\_, Vice President, Oconee Nuclear Station

Subscribed and sworn to me: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date 2/3/04

 \_\_\_\_\_, Notary Public

My Commission Expires: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date 6/12/2013

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ENCLOSURE  
Oconee Nuclear Station  
Response to NRC Bulletin 2003-02, Item 2

**Requested Information**

- (2) Within 60 days of plant restart following the next inspection of the RPV lower head penetrations, the subject PWR addressees should submit to the NRC a summary of the inspections performed, the extent of the inspections, the methods used, a description of the as-found condition of the lower head, any findings of relevant indications of through-wall leakage, and a summary of the disposition of any findings of boric acid deposits and any corrective actions taken as a result of indications found.

**Duke Response**

On September 25, 2003, Duke conducted a bare metal inspection of the Unit 1 reactor vessel lower head, including 360 degrees around 100 percent of the bottom mounted instrument (BMI) penetrations. Duke conducted the inspection using video cameras and direct visual observation.

The inspection showed no evidence of boron or any other indications of leakage from the reactor vessel lower head or penetrations. No wastage was observed. Deterioration (flaking) of the original preservative coating on the lower head was noted as well as superficial surface rust attributed to condensation.

The surface of the lower head was cleaned to remove the loose material following the inspection and video-taped for future reference to the as-left condition.

The Oconee Unit 1 refueling outage for end-of-cycle 21 was concluded on January 06, 2004, when the unit was placed on line.