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July 13, 2004



Docket Nos.: 50-321
50-366

U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
ATTN: Document Control Desk
Washington, D. C. 20555-0001

Edwin I. Hatch Nuclear Plant
Relief Request for RPV Circumferential Shell Weld Inspection

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The following information is provided in response to questions raised during a phone call on June 22, 2004 between the NRC staff and Southern Nuclear Operating Company (SNC) personnel. Specifically, the staff wanted to know how the fluence for Hatch Unit 2 is calculated before they consider SNC's relief request for RPV circumferential shell weld inspection (RR-38).

SNC noted that the fluence issue will be addressed separately and is not technically tied to the relief request. Each item is discussed below.

Under separate letter (NL-04-1123) SNC requested a delay in performing updated fluence calculations using an approved fluence methodology. This delay is due to SNC's intent to use the RAMA methodology for future fluence calculations. The RAMA methodology has been submitted generically through the BWRVIP and is currently under NRC review. The interim use of a methodology other than RAMA to update fluence calculations is unwarranted at the current RPV fluence level of Hatch Units 1 and 2.

Regarding the RPV circumferential shell weld inspection relief request, the existing vessel beltline Pressure/Temperature (PT) curves are approved to 54 Effective Full Power Years (EFPY). The current fuel cycle projection for Plant Hatch Units 1 and 2 is 24.2 EFPY and 22.1 EFPY respectively for August 1, 2007. Therefore, the vessel material properties and current PT curves have sufficient margin to remain conservative through the projected date for implementation of an approved fluence methodology, which is estimated to be not later than July 31, 2007. At that time, PT curves will be evaluated and revised if necessary.

A047

This letter contains no NRC commitments. If you have any questions, please advise.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lewis Sumner".

H. L. Sumner, Jr.

HLS/WHC/daj

cc: Southern Nuclear Operating Company
Mr. J. B. Beasley, Jr., Executive Vice President
Mr. G. R. Frederick, General Manager – Plant Hatch
RTYPE: CHA02.004

U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Dr. W. D. Travers, Regional Administrator
Mr. C. Gratton, NRR Project Manager – Hatch
Mr. D. S. Simpkins, Senior Resident Inspector – Hatch