December 6, 2004

Mr. A. Christopher Bakken, III
President and Chief Nuclear Officer
PSEG LLC - X04
P. O. Box 236
Hancocks Bridge, NJ 08038

SUBJECT: SALEM NUCLEAR GENERATING STATION, UNIT NOS. 1 AND 2 - RESPONSE TO NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION BULLETIN 2003-02, "LEAKAGE FROM REACTOR PRESSURE VESSEL LOWER HEAD PENETRATIONS AND REACTOR COOLANT PRESSURE BOUNDARY INTEGRITY" (TAC NOS. MC0561 AND MC0562)

Dear Mr. Bakken;

On August 21, 2003, the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) issued NRC Bulletin 2003-02, "Leakage from Reactor Pressure Vessel Lower Head Penetrations and Reactor Coolant Pressure Boundary Integrity," to the industry. This bulletin informed addressees that current methods of inspecting the reactor pressure vessel (RPV) lower heads may need to be supplemented with bare-metal visual inspections in order to detect reactor coolant pressure boundary leakage. The bulletin also requested these addressees to provide the NRC with information related to inspections that have been performed to verify the integrity of the RPV lower head penetrations.

The bulletin requested that addressees provide a description of the RPV lower head penetration inspection program that would be implemented at their respective plants during the next and subsequent refueling outages. This description was to include the extent of the inspection, the inspection methods to be used, the qualification standards for the inspection methods, the process used to resolve the source of findings of boric acid deposits or corrosion, the inspection documentation to be generated, and the basis for concluding that their plant satisfied applicable regulatory requirements related to the structural and leakage integrity of the RPV lower head penetrations.

By letter dated September 11, 2003, PSEG Nuclear, LLC (PSEG) provided its response to this request. As part of its response, PSEG committed to perform a 360-degree bare-metal visual examination of each penetration at the interface between the penetration and the RPV lower head, during future refueling outages at Salem Generating Station (Salem), Unit Nos. 1 and 2. PSEG is requested to notify the NRC staff in writing of any changes to this regulatory commitment prior to implementation.

The bulletin also requested that addressees provide a summary of the RPV lower head penetration inspection that was performed at their plants, the extent of the inspection and 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.

By letter dated December 23, 2003, PSEG provided a summary of its inspection results at Salem, Unit No. 2. PSEG reported it had performed a 360-degree bare-metal visual examination on all 58 RPV lower head penetrations. PSEG did not observe any evidence of RPV lower head penetration leakage.

By letter dated July 6, 2004, PSEG provided a summary of its inspection results at Salem, Unit No. 1. PSEG reported it had performed a 360-degree bare-metal visual examination on all 58 RPV lower head penetrations. PSEG did not observe any evidence of RPV lower head penetration leakage.

Based on its review of PSEG's responses to NRC Bulletin 2003-02, the NRC staff finds that Salem has met the reporting requirements of the bulletin. Accordingly, TAC Nos. MC0561 and MC0562 are closed for Salem, Unit Nos. 1 and 2, respectively.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Daniel S. Collins, Senior Project Manager, Section 2
Project Directorate I
Division of Licensing Project Management
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket Nos. 50-272 and 50-311

cc: See next page

Salem Nuclear Generating Station, Unit Nos. 1 and 2

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The bulletin also requested that addressees provide a summary of the RPV lower head penetration inspection that was performed at their plants, the extent of the inspection and 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.

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