

February 9, 2005

Mr. Mark E. Warner, Site Vice President  
c/o James M. Peschel  
Seabrook Station  
FPL Energy Seabrook, LLC  
P. O. Box 300  
Seabrook, NH 03874

SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION BULLETIN 2003-02,  
"LEAKAGE FROM REACTOR PRESSURE VESSEL LOWER HEAD  
PENETRATIONS AND REACTOR COOLANT PRESSURE BOUNDARY  
INTEGRITY," SEABROOK STATION, UNIT NO. 1 - (TAC NO. MC0563)

Dear Mr. Warner:

On August 21, 2003, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) issued NRC Bulletin 2003-02, "Leakage from Reactor Pressure Vessel Lower Head Penetrations and Reactor Coolant Pressure Boundary Integrity." 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 19, 2003, FPL Energy Seabrook, LLC (FPL) provided its response to this request for Seabrook Station (Seabrook), Unit No. 1. FPL indicated it planned to perform a bare-metal visual examination of all 58 RPV lower head penetrations, including 100 percent of the circumference of each penetration as it enters the RPV lower head, during the fall 2003 refueling outage. Regarding subsequent refueling outages beyond the fall 2003 outage, FPL indicated that the examination scope, when performed, will include all 58 RPV lower head penetrations, including 100 percent of the circumference of each penetration as it enters the RPV lower head. The NRC staff notes that there are a number of ongoing industry and NRC staff activities related to developing criteria for RPV lower head penetration inspections. The NRC staff expects that the criteria for these inspections will involve periodic bare-metal visual examinations or their equivalent.

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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.

By letter dated December 18, 2003, FPL provided a summary of its inspection results at Seabrook, Unit No. 1. FPL reported it had performed a 360-degree bare-metal visual examination on all 58 RPV lower head penetrations. In addition, a bare-metal visual examination was performed on the RPV lower surface. FPL did not observe any evidence of RPV lower head penetration leakage or RPV lower head surface metal degradation.

Based on its review of FPL's responses to NRC Bulletin 2003-02, the NRC staff finds that, for Seabrook, Unit No. 1, FPL has provided the reporting information requested by the bulletin. Accordingly, TAC No. MC0563 is closed for Seabrook, Unit No. 1.

Sincerely,

*/RA/*

Victor Nerses, Senior Project Manager, Section 2  
Project Directorate I  
Division of Licensing Project Management  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket No. 50-443

cc: See next page

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Sincerely,

*/RA/*

Victor Nerses, Senior Project Manager, Section 2  
Project Directorate I  
Division of Licensing Project Management  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket Nos. 50-443

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