

April 5, 2005

Mr. Gregory M. Rueger
Senior Vice President, Generation and
Chief Nuclear Officer
Pacific Gas and Electric Company
Diablo Canyon Power Plant
P.O. Box 3
Avila Beach, CA 93424

SUBJECT: DIABLO CANYON POWER PLANT, UNIT NO. 1 - RESPONSE TO NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION BULLETIN 2003-02, "LEAKAGE FROM REACTOR PRESSURE VESSEL LOWER HEAD PENETRATIONS AND REACTOR COOLANT PRESSURE BOUNDARY INTEGRITY" (TAC NO. MC0536)

Dear Mr. Rueger:

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 November 18, 2003, Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) provided its response to this request. PG&E committed to perform a bare-metal visual examination of the RPV lower head during the next refueling outage (Unit 1 twelfth refueling outage in Spring 2004) and every third refueling outage thereafter until such a time that industry experience or regulatory guidance indicates a modification of the inspection frequency or method is warranted. Specifically, PG&E committed that this examination scope would include all 58 RPV lower head penetrations, including 100 percent of the circumference of each penetration as it enters the RPV lower head, and the areas surrounding the tubes. Hence, PG&E is requested to make it a regulatory commitment and notify the NRC in writing of any significant change to this commitment in the future.

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 July 6, 2004, PG&E provided a summary of its inspection results at Diablo Canyon Power Plant, Unit 1. PG&E reported that during the Unit 1 twelfth refueling outage, completed on June 7, 2004, it had performed 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, and the areas surrounding the penetrations. PG&E did not observe any evidence of RPV lower head penetration leakage.

Based on its review of PG&E's responses to NRC Bulletin 2003-02, the NRC staff finds that PG&E has met the reporting requirements of the bulletin for Diablo Canyon Power Plant, Unit 1. Accordingly, TAC No. MC0536 is closed for Diablo Canyon Power Plant, Unit 1.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Girija Shukla, Project Manager, Section 2
Project Directorate IV
Division of Licensing Project Management
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket No. 50-275

cc: See next page

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 July 6, 2004, PG&E provided a summary of its inspection results at Diablo Canyon Power Plant, Unit 1. PG&E reported that during the Unit 1 twelfth refueling outage, completed on June 7, 2004, it had performed 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, and the areas surrounding the penetrations. PG&E did not observe any evidence of RPV lower head penetration leakage.

Based on its review of PG&E's responses to NRC Bulletin 2003-02, the NRC staff finds that PG&E has met the reporting requirements of the bulletin for Diablo Canyon Power Plant, Unit 1. Accordingly, TAC No. MC0536 is closed for Diablo Canyon Power Plant, Unit 1.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Girija Shukla, Project Manager, Section 2
Project Directorate IV
Division of Licensing Project Management
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

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