

February 14, 2006

Mr. John M. Humphrey
25967 Mar Vista Court
Los Gatos, CA 95033

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR INFORMATION CONCERNING THE MARK I BWR DELTA-P
METHOD USED TO DESIGN AND OPERATE NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS

In response to your letter dated January 16, 2006, the NRC staff collected information concerning the use of the differential pressure between the drywell and the suppression chamber of Mark I containments. Several BWR/3 and BWR/4 reactors with Mark I containments are still operating. The enclosed 2004-2005 Edition of the United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission Information Digest contains a list of the operating nuclear reactors in the United States. The list also includes the type of containment used for each reactor.

The standard technical specifications (STS) for BWR/4 reactors includes a limiting condition for operations based on the drywell-to-suppression chamber differential pressure. If the differential pressure is not maintained, the reactor power is required to be reduced below 15%. A page from the BWR/4 STS is provided as attachment 1. The STSs for different types of reactors are available on the world-wide web at <http://www.nrc.gov/reactors/operating/licensing/techspecs/current-approved-sts.html>.

I note that you also had an interest in Mark III BWR containment response. One of our more experienced staff members recognized your name and remembered that the Grand Gulf Updated Final Safety Analysis Report (UFSAR), contains responses to "Humphrey Issues." Attachment 2 contains selected UFSAR pages that refer to "Humphrey Issues."

As you can see, the Mark I BWR drywell-to-suppression chamber differential pressure has been and continues to be used in the safe operations and regulation of nuclear power plants. Thank you for your contributions over the last 30 years in ensuring that the use of nuclear power is conducted in a manner that protects public health and safety, and the environment.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Bruce Boger, Associate Director
for Operating Reactor Oversight and Licensing
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Attachment: 1. Standard Technical Specifications General Electric Plants, BWR/4
2. Grand Gulf Nuclear Station, Updated Final Analysis Report

Enclosure: 2004-2005 Edition of the United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Information Digest

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