

April 7, 2006

Mr. Ronnie L. Gardner
AREVA NP Inc.
3315 Old Forest Road
P.O. Box 10935
Lynchburg, VA 24506-0935

SUBJECT: PROPOSED PLAN FOR PHASE 2 OF THE EVOLUTIONARY POWER
REACTOR (EPR) PRE-APPLICATION REVIEW

Dear Mr. Gardner,

In your letter of February 3, 2006, you provided a proposed plan for Phase 2 of the AREVA NP, Inc. (AREVA) EPR pre-application review. The proposal included a series of meetings and planned submittals in a variety of topic areas.

This letter documents NRC's commitment to support the planned scope of activities. However, additional planning is needed to ensure AREVA and NRC activities are effectively coordinated.

Proposed Meetings

Your letter provided a table listing a number of meetings taking place at monthly intervals through the end of this calendar year. The NRC staff will support these meetings. We expect that as the pre-application review proceeds, you may find the need to revise the topics or objectives for the meetings, or to propose additional meetings. In such an event, please inform the NRC as soon as practical so the agency's plans can be adjusted as necessary.

Proposed Submittals and Associated Review Products

Your letter describes two sets of submittals planned for the EPR pre-application effort. One group of items is topical reports which have been described in Phase 1 pre-application planning meetings. For these items, the NRC has budgeted resources to support reviewing these reports. Review schedules for these items will be confirmed with you when we have received your submittals. It is our goal to complete these reviews in a timely manner supportive of your needs for development of your design certification application.

The second set of items, described in Attachment 2 of your letter, is a group of submittals planned to facilitate early review and resolution of issues during pre-application review. For these items, it will be important to establish common understanding of the expected products resulting from the staff's review. For example, a number of items in your list include a stated objective for early start on a review topic. We will need to discuss each of these items further to determine what outcome is desired and what products the NRC can provide during the pre-application review. The NRC also intends to provide resources to support these activities, assuming appropriate expectations are established.

If results of pre-application reviews are to inform NRC staff review of your design certification application, it is important that your submittals reflect a high degree of configuration control, ensuring that information assessed during pre-application is the same as the information submitted for design certification.

Design Certification Resource and Schedule Requirements

Your letter also requested that the NRC provide the resource requirements and schedule for review of the design certification application. As stated in SECY-01-0188, "Future Licensing and Inspection Readiness Assessment," the NRC expects a design certification review to take 42-60 months, dependent on the uniqueness of the design, whether there is a need for testing to demonstrate performance of safety feature and the extent of that testing, and whether policy matters need to be addressed. The review duration is also highly dependent on the quality and completeness of application.

The NRC will develop schedule and resource projections for the EPR design certification over the course of Phase 2 of the pre-application review. This effort will include consideration of the benefit of review of the topics described in Attachment 2 of your letter. As part of the Multinational Design Approval Program, NRC's planning will also consider the anticipated effect of interactions with our foreign counterparts who are also reviewing the EPR design. While these factors may shorten portions the design certification review, reviews in all technical areas at or near the critical path for completion of the review will need to be shortened to have a significant effect on the overall schedule. The NRC will not publish a schedule for the EPR design certification review until the staff has an opportunity to examine your application as part of its acceptance review.

I can be reached at 301-415-1470 or at jfw1@nrc.gov if you have questions regarding this letter.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Joseph F. Williams, Senior Project Manager
New Reactor Licensing Branch
Division of New Reactor Licensing
Office of New Reactor Regulation

Project No. 733

cc: See next page

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ADAMS ACCESSION NO. ML060900021

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OFFICIAL RECORD COPY

Distribution for Letter to R. Gardner dated April 7, 2006

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