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MFN 06-337

Docket No. 52-010

September 22, 2006

U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Document Control Desk
Washington, D.C. 20555-0001

Subject: **Review of ESBWR Design Certification Application
- Design Control Document Schedule Update**

The purpose of this letter is to provide the NRC Staff with information regarding the schedule for submittals related to the ESBWR standard plant design certification review currently underway. We understand that the NRC Staff will be providing a status update to identify any changes to the current schedule to which GE and the NRC Staff are working. The information provided below may better inform the Staff's letter.

By way of background, in a letter dated August 24, 2005, General Electric Company (GE) submitted an application for final design approval and standard design certification of the ESBWR standard plant design. By letter dated December 1, 2005, the NRC Staff informed GE that the application, as revised and supplemented, was sufficiently complete to allow the Staff to proceed with its detailed technical review, and established a schedule of October 2007 for issuance of the safety evaluation report (SER) with open items. The NRC Staff established a date of October 11, 2006, for issuing its requests for additional information (RAI), with GE responses by November 22, 2006.

In a letter dated August 9, 2006, the NRC Staff informed GE that the schedule for issuance of RAIs in topical areas impacted by delayed submittals and/or design changes has been extended from October 11, 2006 to December 11, 2006. The impacted topical areas identified in the August 9 letter included Probabilistic Risk Assessment (PRA), Instrumentation and Control (I&C), Human Factors Engineering (HFE), Fission Product Removal (Design Basis Accident Dose Evaluation), and Control Rod Design.

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Revision 1 of the design control document (DCD) was issued March 2006. In recent discussions between GE and the NRC Staff and in presentations by the ESBWR Design Centered Working Group, GE informed the NRC Staff that GE would submit Revision 2 of the DCD by the end of October 2006. This submittal will revise the DCD in its entirety, with the exception of Tier 1, Chapter 1, 16 and 19 of Tier 2. GE currently plans to submit Revision 2 of these portions of the DCD, except for the PRA Chapter 19, by the end of November 2006. Revision 3, which is to incorporate GE's responses to NRC RAIs, is to be submitted by February 22, 2007, except for the PRA Chapter 19, to support the NRC Staff's schedule for an SER with open items by October 2007. GE remains committed to support these dates.

One purpose for submitting Revision 2 is to describe design changes to the isolation condenser system (referred to as the water level change) and to the electrical system (referred to as the N minus 2 change). GE has provided information on these design changes through teleconferences and separate submittals to the NRC Staff. Specifically, a September 20, 2006 letter to the NRC provided summary information describing key aspects of the water level change, including certain design details, in advance of the DCD submittal, so the NRC Staff could begin its review of the design change. Additional information, describing in more detail the location and orientation of the new water storage volume of the isolation condenser system, will be provided by September 29, 2006. By this same date, GE will provide an advance copy of DCD Chapter 8 Revision 2, which provides implementation of the electrical system design change.

In addition to these design changes and incorporation of certain of the RAI responses, Revision 2 will include changes to the design information that will allow elimination of a number of items currently identified as COL information items that would need to be addressed in a combined construction and operating license (COL) application.¹ By including additional design information – or in some cases by including appropriate inspections, testing, analyses, and acceptance criteria (ITAAC) – the DCD addresses the standard design or identifies that the design features will be verified through ITAAC at the COL stage.²

Finally, as discussed with the NRC Staff on September 20, 2006, in addition to incorporation of RAI responses, Revision 3 will include (1) additional information that

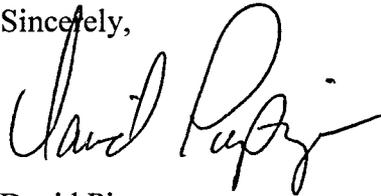
¹ Revision 2 also will include changes to Chapter 2. As discussed in a September 20, 2006 NRC meeting with the ESBWR Design Centered Working Group, GE may remove information that quotes NRC guidance or make other changes that more clearly indicate that the COL information items related to the site characteristics (which demonstrate that the design certification site parameters are enveloped) are the responsibility of the COL applicant and are not covered by the standard design. GE will discuss this further with the NRC Staff prior to submitting Revision 2 and this is planned for discussion during the next meeting of the Design Centered Working Group.

² GE recognizes that ITAACs require action on the part of a COL applicant or licensee; therefore, the DCD will describe a standard process that establishes completion of an ITAAC, as compared to a COL applicant determining how to verify completion of a COL action item without a standard method being described in the DCD. GE believes that an ITAAC provides a greater degree of standardization, in line with the Commission's goals for standard designs.

reflects changes in certain sections which currently include COL information items (and changes to the various sections and the comprehensive Table 1.10-1); and (2) information describing some changes to the design that have been identified as part of the ongoing process. To the extent that GE continues to interact with the NRC Staff regarding schedules and changes, the information in Revision 3 should be familiar to the staff; however, we recognize that new information included in Revision 3 may result in additional open items in the October 2007 SER. As with other open items, GE will continue to work toward resolution of these items to be addressed in one or more subsequent revisions.

The information discussed herein covers near-term submittals; we would like to discuss a more complete, longer-term schedule for the submittals following Revision 3 in a meeting with the NRC Staff, with a date for the meeting established during our ongoing interactions. Please contact us if you have any questions regarding the information discussed herein.

Sincerely,



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