



UNITED STATES  
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION  
REGION IV  
611 RYAN PLAZA DRIVE, SUITE 400  
ARLINGTON, TEXAS 76011-4005

January 22, 2007

EA-04-101

J. V. Parrish (Mail Drop 1023)  
Chief Executive Officer  
Energy Northwest  
P.O. Box 968  
Richland, WA 99352-0968

SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO NONCITED VIOLATION IN NRC INSPECTION  
REPORT 05000397/2003007

Dear Mr. Parrish:

In your letter of April 16, 2004, Energy Northwest (ENW) contested a Green NRC-identified noncited violation (NCV) concerning the conduct of local leak rate testing (LLRT) of the main steam isolation valves (MSIVs) at Columbia Generating Station (CGS). This NCV (50-397/03-07-01) was documented in NRC Inspection Report 0500397/2003007. You requested that this NCV be withdrawn and provided a summary of the actions that ENW was pursuing concerning this issue. On August 16, 2004, the NRC responded to your letter by acknowledging your basis for disputing the noncited violation, and informing you that the NRC was evaluating the basis for your request for withdrawal of this NCV, including reviewing the generic aspects of this issue.

This NCV pertained to a violation of Technical Specification Surveillance Requirement 3.6.1.11. Specifically, ENW had performed inadequate MSIV local leak rate testing by utilizing nonsafety-related instrument air to assist in closing and seating the valves during testing. In your response, ENW disagreed with the NCV. Your letter noted that: 10 CFR Part 50, Appendix J, Section III.C.1, states that each valve to be tested shall be closed by normal operation and without any preliminary exercising or adjustments. Also, ANSI/ANS 56.8 - 1994, Section 3.3.3, states that closure of primary containment isolation valves for Type C testing shall be accomplished by normal or equivalent means and without adjustment. ENW considered closure of the MSIVs with the nonsafety-related air sources to be the "normal means" of closing the MSIVs at CGS.

The NRC has evaluated your position. This evaluation included a review of the rule language, the applicable statements of consideration, the CGS Final Safety Analysis Report (FSAR), the technical and safety basis of the test methodology in question, as well as, the generic implications of this issue. On the basis of this review, the NRC staff has concluded that the "normal" method for closing the MSIVs during normal operations is with springs only (slow closure, no instrument air or accumulator air). The FSAR states in Section 5.4.5.4, "Inspection

and Testing,” that “all MSIVs are closed utilizing both spring force and air pressure on the operating cylinder.” The term “normal or equivalent means” can reasonably be interpreted to include the non-safety air supply. Accordingly, we are withdrawing this violation.

While this contested NCV was being reviewed by the NRC staff, we understand that CGS has been testing the MSIVs in a manner that ensured the valves would fully close using spring force and safety related air pressure for the purposes of local leak rate testing. This has provided satisfactory leak rate test results and an added measure of assurance that the valves would operate correctly under conditions where non-safety related air was not available. Given the efficacy of this testing methodology, we are interested in understanding your future plans for testing the MSIVs.

In accordance with 10 CFR 2.390 of the NRC's "Rules of Practice," a copy of this letter will be made available electronically for public inspection in the NRC Public Document Room or from the Publicly Available Records (PARS) component of NRC's document system (ADAMS). ADAMS is accessible from the NRC Web site at <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html> (the Public Electronic Reading Room).

Should you have any questions concerning this matter, please contact Mr. Claude Johnson at 817-860-8148.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Arthur T. Howell III, Director  
Division of Reactor Projects

Docket: 50-397  
License: NPF-21

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RIV:SPE:DRP/A	SRI:DRP/A	C:DRP/A	EF:ACES	D:DRS
TRFarnholtz	ZKDunham	CEJohnson	MSHaire	DDChamberlain
<i>/RA/</i>	<i>/RA/</i>	<i>/RA/</i>	<i>/RA/</i>	<b>RJCaniano for</b>
11/16/06	12/6/06	12/19/06	12/6/06	12/6/06
OE/EPPOS	C:DRS/EB2	D:DRP		
DLSolorio	LJSmith	ATHowell III		
<b>E-MSHaire</b>	<i>/RA/</i>	<i>/RA/</i>		
12/7/06	12/6/06	01/22/06		