

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
CORRESPONDENCE CONTROL TICKET

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ACTION OFFICE: EDO

To: Mallett, RIV

AUTHOR: Bob Leyse

AFFILIATION: ID

ADDRESSEE: Dale Klein

SUBJECT: Wick boiling assertion

CYS: EDO
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MEDIA
AS
NRR

ACTION: Appropriate

DISTRIBUTION:

LETTER DATE: 03/13/2007

ACKNOWLEDGED No

SPECIAL HANDLING: Made publicly available in ADAMS via EDO/DPC

NOTES:

FILE LOCATION: ADAMS

DATE DUE:

DATE SIGNED:

CHAIRMAN - Wick Boiling

From: <Bobleyse@aol.com>
To: <Chairman@NRC.gov>
Date: 03/13/2007 10:47 AM
Subject: Wick Boiling

Sir:

Reference: Leyse e-mail to Chairman, NRC, dated February 11, 2007.

Thank you for arranging the follow-up to the above e-mail. Yesterday, Mr. Replogle of Region IV and I had a very constructive telephone conversation. At my request we focused on wick boiling. The following is copied from my February 11, 2007, e-mail.

Report B states: "In most circumstances wick boiling occurs in the crud."

Comment: This is incorrect. Indeed, that entire paragraph should be deleted in a corrected report. The team should study report ANL 6136.

The wick boiling assertion is likely traceable to a proprietary report by EPRI that includes an evaluation of a sample of fuel element scale from River Bend Cycle 11. However, it is unlikely that NRC has reviewed the EPRI report as a topical report that may serve as a basis for plant licensing. And it is unlikely that the EPRI report has been incorporated in proprietary computer codes or versions of TRACE that reactor plant owners may use in licensing.

Following is a further quote from my e-mail of February 11, 2007:

Report B: "Because this issue is of very low safety significance"

Now, the severe fouling of fuel during River Bend Cycle 11 is most certainly not an issue of very low safety significance. However, the statement is possibly traceable to a convenient mindset among nuclear power plant owners that an EPRI report, even though it has not been reviewed by the NRC, is a credible basis for certifying the safety of nuclear power plant operations.

Robert H. Leyse

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