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50-364

NL-06-2801

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

**Joseph M. Farley Nuclear Plant Unit 1 and Unit 2
Technical Specification Amendment Request
Containment Leakage Rate Testing Program**

Ladies and Gentlemen:

In accordance with the provisions of 10 CFR 50.90, Southern Nuclear Operating Company (SNC) is proposing a change to the Joseph M. Farley Nuclear Plant (FNP) Unit 1 and Unit 2 Technical Specifications (TS). This proposed change will revise TS section 5.5.17, "Containment Leakage Rate Testing Program," to resolve a timing conflict between the FNP Unit 2 R20 refueling outage schedule and the FNP Unit 2 Type A Containment Integrated Leak Rate Test (ILRT) required completion date of March 2010. Although Unit 1 does not have a current timing conflict, a similar Unit 1 change is proposed for consistency.

This proposed change is consistent with a previous SNC Licensing Amendment Request dated April 4, 2002, supplemented by letter dated January 9, 2003, and NRC Safety Evaluation submitted to SNC by letter dated March 21, 2003. The basis and conclusions reached in the significant hazards evaluation, as well as the technical information, provided in SNC letters dated April 4, 2002 and January 9, 2003 remain valid and unchanged.

Southern Nuclear Operating Company requests the proposed amendment be approved by October 31, 2008.

(Affirmation and signature are provided on the following page.)

Mr. L. M. Stinson states he is a Vice President of Southern Nuclear Operating Company, is authorized to execute this oath on behalf of Southern Nuclear Operating Company and to the best of his knowledge and belief, the facts set forth in this letter are true.

This letter contains no NRC commitments. If you have any questions, please advise.

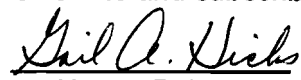
Respectfully submitted,

SOUTHERN NUCLEAR OPERATING COMPANY



L. M. Stinson
Vice President Fleet Operations Support

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 5th day of November, 2007.



Gail A. Hicks
Notary Public

My commission expires: July 5, 2010

LMS/SYA/daj

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cc: Southern Nuclear Operating Company
 Mr. J. T. Gasser, Executive Vice President
 Mr. J. R. Johnson, Vice President – Farley
 Mr. D. H. Jones, Vice President – Engineering
 RTYPE: CFA04.054; LC# 14535

U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Dr. W. D. Travers, Regional Administrator
Ms. K. R. Cotton, NRR Project Manager – Farley
Mr. E. L. Crowe, Senior Resident Inspector – Farley

**Joseph M. Farley Nuclear Plant Unit 1 and Unit 2
Technical Specification Amendment Request
Containment Leakage Rate Testing Program**

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**Joseph M. Farley Nuclear Plant Unit 1 and Unit 2
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Enclosure 1

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Basis for Proposed Change

1.0 Summary Description

This evaluation supports a request to revise Facility Operating License No. NPF-2 and Facility Operating License No. NPF-8 for Farley Nuclear Plant (FNP) Units 1 and 2 in order to resolve a schedule conflict between the FNP Unit 2 R20 refueling outage schedule and the 15-year test date for the FNP Type A Containment Integrated Leak Rate Test (ILRT). Previously, Southern Nuclear Operating Company (SNC) submitted an amendment request by letter dated April 4, 2002 and supplemented by letter dated January 9, 2003. This previous change reflected a one-time deferral of the Type A Containment ILRT. The ten (10) year interval between integrated leakage rate tests was extended to fifteen (15) years. Amendment No. 159 for Unit 1 and No. 150 for Unit 2, with corresponding Safety Evaluation (SE), were transmitted to SNC by NRC letter dated March 21, 2003. These amendments to FNP Technical Specification (TS) 5.5.17 changed the next scheduled ILRT Type A testing to 15 years from the March 1994 test for Unit 1 (March 2009) and 15 years from the March 1995 test for Unit 2 (March 2010). Although Unit 1 does not have a current timing conflict, a similar Unit 1 change is proposed for consistency. However, the next refueling outage for FNP Unit 2 has been scheduled to begin on April 3, 2010. This creates a three day lag time between the time interval defined in the FNP TS and the actual refueling outage start date. To resolve this scheduling conflict, SNC requests to revise TS 5.5.17 to reflect the FNP Unit 1 R22 and Unit 2 R20 refueling outage dates by incorporating the following change to TS 5.5.17:

A program shall be established to implement the leakage rate testing of containment as required by 10 CFR 50.54 (o) and 10 CFR 50, Appendix J, Option B, as modified by approved exemptions. This program shall be in accordance with the guidelines contained in Regulatory Guide 1.163, "Performance-Based Containment Leak-Test Program," dated September 1995, as modified by the following exception to NEI 94-01, Rev. 0, "Industry Guidelines for Implementing Performance-Based Option of 10 CFR 50, Appendix J":

Section 9.2.3: The next Type A test, after the March 1994 test for Unit 1 and the March 1995 test for Unit 2, shall be performed **during refueling outage R22 (Spring 2009) for Unit 1 and during refueling outage R20 (Spring 2010) for Unit 2.** This is a one time exception.

The basis and conclusions previously determined in SNC letters dated April 4, 2002 and January 9, 2003 are valid and remain unchanged. The wording "Spring 2009" and "Spring 2010" was referenced in both SNC letters to the NRC and the NRC SE submitted to SNC on March 21, 2003 that approved the ILRT Type A one-time deferral from 10 to 15 years.

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2.0 Detailed Description

As stated in SNC's previous amendment request dated April 4, 2002, (Reference 1), under the performance based option of 10 CFR 50, Appendix J, the test frequency is based upon an evaluation that reviews "as found" leakage history to determine the frequency for leakage testing which provides assurance that leakage limits will be maintained. FNP TS 5.5.17 requires that leakage rate testing be performed as required by 10 CFR 50.54(o) and 10 CFR 50, Appendix J, Option B, as modified by approved exemptions, and in accordance with the guidelines contained in Regulatory Guide (RG) 1.163, "Performance-Based Containment Leak-Test Program," dated September 1995. This RG endorses, with certain exceptions, Nuclear Energy Institute (NEI) report 94-01, Revision 0, "Industry Guideline for Implementing Performance-Based Option of 10 CFR Part 50, Appendix J," dated July 26, 1995.

The regulations in 10 CFR 50, Appendix J were revised, effective October 26, 1995, to allow licensees to perform containment leakage testing in accordance with the requirements of Option A, "Prescriptive Requirements," or Option B, "Performance-Based Requirements." Amendment 122 was issued for Farley, Unit 1 on September 3, 1996, and Amendment 114 was issued for Farley, Unit 2 on September 3, 1996, to permit implementation of 10 CFR 50, Appendix J, Option B. These Amendments, in accordance with RG 1.163, specify a method acceptable to the NRC for complying with Option B by approving the use of NEI 94-01 and American National Standards Institute/American Nuclear Society 56.8 - 1994, subject to several regulatory positions provided in RG 1.163.

NEI 94-01 requires that Type A testing be performed at least once per ten (10) years based upon an acceptable performance history. Acceptable performance history is defined as two consecutive periodic Type A tests at least 24 months apart where the calculated performance leakage rate was less than $1.0 L_a$. As stated in Reference 1, the ILRTs for Unit 1 (May 1991 and March 1994) and Unit 2 (December 1990 and March 1995) were acceptable. Further FNP ILRT History is provided in Reference 1. Also, the allowed frequency for Type A testing, as documented in NEI 94-01, is based, in part, upon a generic evaluation documented in NUREG-1493. The observations made in NUREG-1493 include the following:

- Reducing the Type A ILRT testing frequency to once per twenty (20) years was found to lead to imperceptible increase in risk. The estimated increase in risk is small because ILRTs identify only a few potential leakage paths that cannot be identified by Type B and C testing, and the leaks that have been found by Type A tests have been only marginally above the existing requirements. Given the insensitivity of risk to containment leakage rate, and the small fraction of leakage detected solely by Type A testing, increasing the interval between ILRT testing has minimal impact on public risk.

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- While Type B and C tests identify the vast majority (greater than 95%) of all potential leakage paths, performance-based alternatives are feasible without significant risk impacts. Since leakage contributes less than 0.1 percent of overall risk under existing requirements, the overall effect is very small.

Amendments 159 and 150 were issued to FNP Unit 1 and Unit 2, respectively, on March 21, 2003 to permit the revision to TS 5.5.17 that allowed for a one-time deferral of the Type A test interval. As a result of Amendments 159 and 150, the current TS were revised to state that the next Unit 1 and Unit 2 Type A test would be performed 15 years from March 1994 for Unit 1 and March 1995 for Unit 2. This places the post 15 year overall verification of the containment leak-tight integrity for FNP Unit 1 in March 2009 and for FNP Unit 2 in March 2010. However, the Type A test for FNP Unit 2 has been scheduled to be performed during the R20 refueling outage which begins in April 2010.

SNC is currently the operating company for Joseph M. Farley Nuclear Plant, Edwin I. Hatch Nuclear Plant and Vogtle Electric Generating Plant. In an effort to standardize operations and schedules between the three plant sites, the refueling outage R22 for FNP Unit 1 has been scheduled to begin on March 28, 2009 and the refueling outage R20 for FNP Unit 2 has been scheduled to begin on April 3, 2010. The next scheduled ILRTs will be conducted during the R22 and R20 refueling outages for FNP Unit 1 and Unit 2, respectively. The FNP Unit 2 R20 refueling outage is scheduled to begin three days after the 15 year time period from March 1995 that is specified in the current TS requirements for the Type A test as per Amendment No. 150. This current revision will include the outage designations of "Spring 2009" for R22 (FNP Unit 1 refueling outage) and "Spring 2010" for R20 (FNP Unit 2 refueling outage) in the FNP Technical Specifications. The basis and the conclusions reached in the significant hazards evaluation provided in Reference 1, summarized in the above paragraphs, remain valid and unchanged.

3.0 Technical Evaluation

According to NRC regulations, 10 CFR 50.55a (b)(2)(ix)(E), licensees must conduct visual inspections of the accessible areas on the interior of the containment three (3) times every ten (10) years. As stated in SNC's letters dated April 4, 2002 (Reference 1) and January 9, 2003 (Reference 2), containment leak tight integrity is verified through periodic inservice inspections conducted in accordance with the requirements of the 1992 edition of American Society of Mechanical Engineers Boiler and Pressure Vessel Code (ASME Code), section XI. Appendix J, Type B local leak tests are performed to verify the leak tight integrity of containment penetration bellows, airlocks, seals and gaskets and Appendix J, Type C local leak tests are performed to verify the leak tight integrity of containment isolation valves. As stated in Reference 2, this frequency of testing of seals, gaskets, and containment pressure retaining bolting provides reasonable assurance that the integrity of the containment pressure boundary is maintained during the period of the extension. These requirements will not be altered as a result of this change that will include the R22 (Spring 2009) refueling

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outage schedule for FNP Unit 1 and the R20 (Spring 2010) refueling outage schedule for FNP Unit 2 to the Technical Specifications.

In response letter dated January 9, 2003, SNC answered questions that were asked during a teleconference with the NRC staff (Reference 2). The following additional information was provided in the response:

- IWE-1240 requires licensees to identify the containment surface areas requiring augmented examinations. However, there are no areas of the Farley Unit 1 or Unit 2 containment liners that require augmented examinations per IWE-1240.
- As stated in Information Notice (IN) 92-20, the stainless steel bellows have been found to be susceptible to trans-granular stress corrosion cracking and the leakage through them is not readily detectable by Type B testing. However, IN 92-20 discussed the inadequate local leak rate testing of two-ply stainless steel bellows and FNP does not have such bellows as a part of the containment pressure boundary.
- Inspections of some reinforced concrete and steel containment structures have found degradation on the uninspectable (embedded) side of the drywell steel shell and steel liner of the primary containment. These degradations cannot be found by visual (i.e., VT-1 or VT-3) examinations unless they are through the thickness of the shell or liner, or, 100% of the uninspectable surfaces are periodically examined by ultrasonic testing. SNC was asked to provide information (additional analyses) addressing how potential leakage under high pressure during core damage accidents is factored into the risk assessment related to the extension of the ILRT. SNC provided the "Joseph M. Farley Nuclear Plant Sensitivity Calculation for the ILRT Extension Risk Assessment" analysis that is a sensitivity evaluation considering potential corrosion impacts within the framework of the ILRT interval extension risk assessment. The analysis confirms that the ILRT interval extension has a minimal impact on plant risk. Additionally, a series of parametric sensitivity studies regarding the potential age related corrosion effects on the steel liner also indicate that even with very conservative assumptions, the conclusions from the original analysis would not change. That is, the ILRT interval extension is judged to have a minimal impact on plant risk and is therefore acceptable. The risk assessment for the ILRT interval extension meets the acceptance criteria of RG 1.174 for total LERF (Reference 2).

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4.0 Regulatory Evaluation

4.1 Significant Hazards Consideration

In 10 CFR 50.92(c), the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) provides the following standards to be used in determining the existence of a significant hazards consideration:

...a proposed amendment to an operating license for a facility licensed under 50.21(b) or 50.22, or for a testing facility involves no significant hazards consideration, if operation of the facility in accordance with the proposed amendment would not: (1) Involve a significant increase in the probability or consequences of an accident previously evaluated; or (2) Create the possibility of a new or different kind of accident from any accident previously evaluated; or (3) Involve a significant reduction in a margin of safety.

Southern Nuclear Operating Company (SNC) has reviewed the proposed amendment request and determined that its adoption does not involve a significant hazards consideration based upon the following discussion:

1. Does the proposed change involve a significant increase in the probability or consequences of an accident previously evaluated?

Response: No.

The proposed revision to Technical Specifications 5.5.17, "Containment Leakage Rate Testing Program," resolves a schedule conflict between the Farley Nuclear Plant (FNP) Unit 2 refueling outage and the fifteen (15) year Containment Integrated Leak Rate Test date that is currently stated in the FNP Technical Specifications. The previous Integrated Leakage Rate Tests were completed in March 1994 for FNP Unit 1 and March 1995 for FNP Unit 2. A 15 year deferral, granted by Amendments No. 159 and No. 150, placed the next integrated leak rate testing for FNP Unit 1 in March 2009 and FNP Unit 2 in March 2010. Due to minor variations in the refueling outage schedule, the current refueling outage for FNP Unit 2 has been scheduled for April 3, 2010 (Spring 2010). The Type A testing will begin during the FNP Unit 2 refueling outage which is three days after the 15 year time period from the March 1995 date that is currently stated in the revised FNP Technical Specifications (TS). This proposed change will revise FNP TS section 5.5.17 to include the current refueling outage schedule R22 (Spring 2009) for Unit 1 and R20 (Spring 2010) for Unit 2. The proposed Technical Specification change does not involve a physical change to the plant or a change in the manner in which the plant is operated or controlled. The reactor containment is designed to provide an essentially leak tight barrier against the uncontrolled release of radioactivity to the environment for postulated accidents. As such, the reactor containment exists to ensure the plant's ability to mitigate the consequence of an accident, and does not involve the prevention or identification of any precursors of an accident.

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Therefore, the proposed Technical Specification change does not involve a significant increase in the probability of an accident previously evaluated.

Type B and C containment leakage testing will continue to be performed at the frequency currently required by plant Technical Specifications. Industry experience has shown, as documented in NUREG-1493, that Type B and C containment leakage tests have identified a very large percentage of containment leakage paths and that the percentage of containment leakage paths that are detected only by Type A testing is very small. FNP test history listed in letter from Southern Nuclear Operating Company to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission dated April 4, 2002 supports this conclusion. The basis and the conclusions reached in the significant hazards evaluation provided in the original SNC amendment request for the ILRT interval extension remain valid and unchanged. Therefore, this change does not involve a significant increase in the consequences of an accident previously evaluated.

2. Does the proposed change create the possibility of a new or different kind of accident from any accident previously evaluated?

Response: No.

This proposed change will revise FNP TS section 5.5.17 to include the current refueling outage schedule of R22 for Unit 1 and R20 for Unit 2. The basis and the conclusions reached in the significant hazards evaluation provided in the original amendment request for the ILRT interval extension remain valid and unchanged. The reactor containment and the testing requirements invoked to periodically demonstrate the integrity of the reactor containment exist to ensure the plant's ability to mitigate the consequences of an accident and do not involve the prevention or identification of any precursors of an accident. The proposed Technical Specification change does not involve a physical change to the plant or a change in the manner in which the plant is operated or controlled. Therefore, the proposed Technical Specification change does not create the possibility of a new or different kind of accident from any accident previously evaluated.

3. Does the proposed change involve a significant decrease in a margin of safety?

Response: No.

This proposed change will revise FNP TS section 5.5.17 to include the current refueling outage schedule of R22 for Unit 1 and R20 for Unit 2. The basis and the conclusions reached in the significant hazards evaluation provided in the original amendment request for the ILRT interval extension remain valid and unchanged. The proposed Technical Specifications change does not involve a physical change to the plant or a change in the manner in which the plant is operated or controlled. The specific requirements and conditions of the Containment Leakage Rate Testing

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Program, as defined in Technical Specifications, exist to ensure that the degree of reactor containment structural integrity and leak tightness that is considered in the plant safety analysis is maintained. The overall containment leakage rate limit specified by Technical Specifications is maintained. Type B and C containment leakage testing will continue to be performed at the frequency currently required by plant Technical Specifications. Industry experience has shown, as documented in NUREG-1493, that Type B and C containment leakage tests have identified a very large percentage of containment leakage paths and that the percentage of containment leakage paths that are detected only by Type A testing is very small. FNP test history listed in a letter from Southern Nuclear Operating Company dated April 4, 2002 to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission supports this conclusion. Therefore, this change does not involve a significant reduction in a margin of safety.

Based on the above, Southern Nuclear Operating Company concludes that the proposed amendment does not involve a significant hazards consideration under the standards set forth in 10 CFR 50.92, and accordingly, a finding of "no significant hazards consideration" is justified.

4.2 Applicable Regulatory Requirements/Criteria

FNP has established a Containment Leakage Rate Testing Program to implement the requirements of 10 CFR 50 Appendix J, Option B, consistent with Regulatory Guide (RG) 1.163, which endorses Nuclear Energy Institute (NEI) 94-01 Revision 0 dated July 26, 1995, "Industry Guideline for Implementing Performance-Based Option of 10 CFR 50, Appendix J," with some exceptions.

4.3 Precedent

Amendments 122 and 114 were issued to FNP Unit 1 and Unit 2, respectively, on September 3, 1996 to permit implementation of 10 CFR 50, Appendix J, Option B. These Amendments, in accordance with RG 1.163, specify a method acceptable to the NRC for complying with Option B by approving the use of NEI 94-01 and American National Standards Institute/American Nuclear Society 56.8 – 1994, subject to several regulatory positions provided in RG 1.163.

Amendments 159 and 150 were issued to FNP Unit 1 and Unit 2, respectively, on March 21, 2003 to permit a revision to FNP TS 5.5.17. These amendments changed the next scheduled ILRT Type A testing to 15 years from the March 1994 test for Unit 1 (March 2009) and 15 years from the March 1995 test for Unit 2 (March 2010).

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4.4 Conclusions

This change to the Farley Nuclear Plant Technical Specifications for the refueling outage schedule from “within 15 years” to “refueling outage R22 (Spring 2009) for Unit 1 and during refueling outage R20 (Spring 2010) for Unit 2” does not significantly change the conclusions to extend the ILRT interval from 10 to 15 years on a one time basis. The technical information and data provided in SNC letter dated April 9, 2002 and supplemented with letter dated January 9, 2003 remain valid and are summarized in this letter. In conclusion, the following items are specific reasons that support the proposed change:

- 1) Type A testing is performed to verify the integrity of the containment structure in its Loss of Coolant Accident (LOCA) configuration. Industry test experience has demonstrated that Type B and C testing detect a large percentage of containment leakage and that the percentage of containment leakage that is detected only by integrated containment leakage testing is very small. Changing the outage schedule from March 2009 and March 2010 to refueling outage R22 (Spring 2009) and refueling outage R20 (Spring 2010) does not significantly increase potential leakage paths not identified by Type B and C testing.
- 2) FNP Unit 1 has undergone 5 operational Type A tests and Unit 2 has undergone 4 operational tests, in addition to the pre-operations Type A tests on each unit. The results of these tests demonstrate that the FNP containment structures, for Unit 1 and Unit 2, remain essentially leak-tight barriers and represent minimal risk to increased leakage. Changing the outage schedule from March 2009 and March 2010 to Spring 2009 and Spring 2010 does not significantly change the leak tightness of the Unit 1 and 2 containment structures.
- 3) Periodic visual inspections required by 10 CFR 50.55a(b)(2)(ix)(E) remain unchanged as a result of the one time extended ILRT interval.

5.0 Environmental Consideration

Southern Nuclear Operating Company has evaluated the proposed changes and determined the changes do not involve (1) a significant hazards consideration, (2) a significant change in the types or significant increase in the amounts of any effluents that may be released offsite, or (3) a significant increase in the individual or cumulative occupational radiation exposure. Accordingly, the proposed changes meet the eligibility criteria for categorical exclusion set forth in 10 CFR 51.22(c)(9), and an environmental assessment of the proposed changes is not required.

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6.0 References

1. Letter from Dave Morey, SNC to NRC, "Joseph M. Farley Nuclear Plant Technical Specification Revision Request: Integrated Leakage Rate Testing Interval Extension," dated April 4, 2002.
2. Letter from J.B. Beasley, SNC to NRC, "Response to Request for Additional Information Technical Specification Revision Request, Integrated Leakage Rate Testing Interval Extension," dated January 9, 2003.
3. Letter from Frank Rinaldi, Project Manager, Section 1, NRC to SNC, "Joseph M. Farley Nuclear Plant, Units 1 and 2 Re: Issuance of Amendments (TAC NOS. MB4756 and MB4757)," dated March 21, 2003.

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Enclosure 2

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5.5 Programs and Manuals

5.5.15 Safety Function Determination Program (SFDP) (continued)

- b. A required system redundant to the system(s) in turn supported by the inoperable supported system is also inoperable; or
- c. A required system redundant to the support system(s) for the supported systems (a) and (b) above is also inoperable.

The SFDP identifies where a loss of safety function exists. If a loss of safety function is determined to exist by this program, the appropriate Conditions and Required Actions of the LCO in which the loss of safety function exists are required to be entered.

5.5.16 Main Steamline Inspection Program

The three main steamlines from the rigid anchor points of the containment penetrations downstream to and including the main steam header shall be inspected. The extent of the inservice examinations completed during each inspection interval (IWA 2400, ASME Code, 1974 Edition, Section XI) shall provide 100 percent volumetric examination of circumferential and longitudinal pipe welds to the extent practical. The areas subject to examination are those defined in accordance with examination category C-G for Class 2 piping welds in Table IWC-2520.

5.5.17 Containment Leakage Rate Testing Program

A program shall be established to implement the leakage rate testing of containment as required by 10 CFR 50.54 (o) and 10 CFR 50, Appendix J, Option B, as modified by approved exemptions. This program shall be in accordance with the guidelines contained in Regulatory Guide 1.163, "Performance-Based Containment Leak-Test Program," dated September 1995, as modified by the following exception to NEI 94-01, Rev. 0, "Industry Guidelines for Implementing Performance-Based Option of 10 CFR 50, Appendix J":

Section 9.2.3: The next Type A test, after the March 1994 test for Unit 1 and the March 1995 test for Unit 2, shall be performed ~~within 15 years~~. This is a one time exception.

The peak calculated containment internal pressure for the design basis loss of coolant accident, P_a , is 43.8 psig.

The maximum allowable containment leakage rate, L_a , at P_a , is 0.15% of containment air weight per day.

during refueling outage R22 (Spring 2009) for Unit 1 and during refueling outage R20 (Spring 2010) for Unit 2.

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5.5 Programs and Manuals

5.5.15 Safety Function Determination Program (SFDP) (continued)

- b. A required system redundant to the system(s) in turn supported by the inoperable supported system is also inoperable; or
- c. A required system redundant to the support system(s) for the supported systems (a) and (b) above is also inoperable.

The SFDP identifies where a loss of safety function exists. If a loss of safety function is determined to exist by this program, the appropriate Conditions and Required Actions of the LCO in which the loss of safety function exists are required to be entered.

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Section 9.2.3: The next Type A test, after the March 1994 test for Unit 1 and the March 1995 test for Unit 2, shall be performed during refueling outage R22 (Spring 2009) for Unit 1 and during refueling outage R20 (Spring 2010) for Unit 2. This is a one time exception.

The peak calculated containment internal pressure for the design basis loss of coolant accident, P_a , is 43.8 psig.

The maximum allowable containment leakage rate, L_a , at P_a , is 0.15% of containment air weight per day.

(continued)