November 20, 2007

MEMORANDUM TO: Michele G. Evans, Director
Division of Component Integrity
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

FROM: Edmund J. Sullivan, Senior Level Advisor **/RA/**
Division of Component Integrity
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

SUBJECT: SUMMARY OF THE OCTOBER 18, 2007, CATEGORY 2 PUBLIC MEETING WITH THE NUCLEAR ENERGY INSTITUTE (NEI) ON OPERATIONAL LEAKAGE (TAC NO. MD5109)

On October 18, 2007, a Category 2 public meeting was held between the U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) staff and industry representatives at the NRC offices in Rockville, Maryland. A list of attendees is provided in Enclosure 1. The purpose of this meeting was for the NRC staff and industry representatives to discuss the NRC staff guidance related to operational leakage in ASME Code Class pressure boundary components. This project was undertaken to address industry concerns raised in the NEI White Paper on Operational Leakage provided to the NRC in May 2006 (Agencywide Documents Management System (ADAMS) Accession No. ML061320347). The NRC staff previously met with the NEI to discuss this issue on August 16, 2006, February 15, 2007 (ADAMS Accession No. ML070540243) and August 30, 2007 (ADAMS Accession No. ML072540476).

The October 18, 2007, public meeting was held to discuss NEI comments on draft Part 9900, Appendices C.11 and C.12, which were provided during the August 30, 2007 public meeting but not fully discussed at that meeting. The October 18th meeting was also held to discuss acceptance criteria for evaluating structural integrity for a prompt operability determination of a leaking pressure boundary component. NRC staff slides used to discuss its responses to NEI comments are provided in Enclosure 2. During these discussions NEI provided Enclosure 3 to clarify its earlier comments through suggested text changes to Appendices C.11 and C.12. Industry representatives used the talking points contained in Enclosure 4 to discuss issues involved with establishing acceptance criteria for evaluating structural integrity during a prompt operability determination of a degraded or leaking component. Some of the major topics discussed were as follows.

NEI representatives noted that there is confusion in the industry regarding when a relief request is required when addressing a leaking pressure boundary component. NEI noted its view that, assuming that adequate structural integrity is demonstrated for the remaining period of plant operation, a relief request is not needed to maintain a “use as is” condition. As a related matter, NEI representatives noted that use of a rubber patch and clamps for the purposes of “housekeeping” to diminish or contain leakage is still a “use as is” condition since a rubber patch would not be used for restoring or maintaining the structural integrity of the leaking component. NEI representative requested that the NRC staff clarify this point when it reissues Part 9900, Appendices C.11 and C.12. The NRC staff agreed to consider these comments in discussions with management in the process of reissuing Part 9900, Appendices C.11 and C.12.

NRC staff and NEI representatives reached agreement that the appropriate acceptance criteria for evaluating structural integrity for a prompt operability determination are the structural integrity criteria provided by the ASME Code, Sections III or XI. This pertains to the subject of the appropriate acceptance criteria to use when a flaw, e.g., a through-wall flaw, is found outside of the preservice inspection and inservice inspections. Industry emphasized that the criteria in ASME Section XI was developed for specific items, for example pipe welds, and it may be appropriate to evaluate some flaws with the construction code rather than Section XI. An example would include a volumetric flaw in a pipe wall. The NRC staff agreed with this observation. During the discussion it was agreed that there may be cases where all of the related criteria need not be met. For example, Section XI, IWD-3600 contains rules for evaluating flaws in Code Class 3 components. Demonstrating the stability of a leaking flaw using these requirements ensures the structural integrity of the leaking component. However, it may not be necessary to satisfy all the requirements of IWD-3600 to ensure structural integrity. One example of this is the requirement in IWD-3643 that “flaws with depth greater than 75% of the wall thickness are unacceptable.” The NRC staff agreed to consider these comments in discussions with management in the process of reissuing Part 9900, Appendices C.11 and C.12.

NEI representatives noted that there may be cases where the margins required by the ASME code for a structural integrity evaluation are satisfied at the time of the operability determination but may not be fully met at some later time prior to plant shutdown. Since this topic applies to NRC staff not in attendance, NRC staff said that discussion of this topic should be postponed to a future meeting. The NRC staff also noted that such a topic would receive more effective discussion if the industry develops a specific set of industry recommendations and shares it with the staff prior to such a meeting. The meeting participants agreed that an in depth discussion of this topic is not needed prior to the staff reissuing Part 9900, Appendices C.11 and C.12.

NEI representatives noted that references in Part 9900, Appendices C.11 and C.12, such as ASME Code Case N-513-1 may be revised in the future. NEI representatives recommended that the NRC staff refer instead to approved revisions to ASME code case so as not to cause the appendices to become out of date when the references are revised. The NRC staff agreed to consider this comment when it reissues Part 9900, Appendices C.11 and C.12.

The NRC staff indicated that it plans to reissue Part 9900, Appendices C.11 and C.12, before the end of the calendar year.

No members of the public were in attendance.

Project No. 689

Enclosure:
1. List of Attendees
2. NRC Slide Presentation
3. NEI Suggested Changes to NRC Staff Draft Appendices C.11 and C.12
4. NEI Write-up: Evaluation of Degraded

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OFFICE	SL:ADES/DCI	SUNSU REVIEW CO.	D:PMDA	D:RES
NAME	E.Sullivan /RA/	E.Sullivan /RA/	T.Lupold /RA/	T.Chan /RA/
DATE	11/20/07	11/20/07	11/20/07	11/20/07

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List of Attendees for October 18, 2007	
Name	**Organization**
Edmund Sullivan	NRC/NRR/DCI
Gerald Waig	NRC/NRR/DIRS/ITSB
Terence Chan	NRC/NRR/DCI/CPNB
Timothy Lupold	NRC/NRR/DCI/CPNB
Edward Weinkam	NMC
Joseph Weicks	Entergy
Mike Schoppman	NEI
Steve Lewis	Entergy
Mike Melton	NEI
Ken Petersen	STARS
Rick Graham	Southern Nuclear
Nathaniel Cofie	Structural Integrity Associates
Ernie Throckmorton	Chesapeake Inservice Inspection/ASME

cc:

Mr. Anthony Pietrangelo, Vice President
Regulatory Affairs
Nuclear Energy Institute
1776 I Street, NW, Suite 400
Washington, DC 20006-3708
arp@nei.org

Mr. Jack Roe, Director
Operations Support
Nuclear Energy Institute
1776 I Street, NW, Suite 400
Washington, DC 20006-3708
jwr@nei.org

Mr. Charles B. Brinkman
Washington Operations
ABB-Combustion Engineering, Inc.
12300 Twinbrook Parkway, Suite 330
Rockville, MD 20852
brinkmcb@westinghouse.com

Mr. Gary L. Vine, Executive Director
Federal and Industry Activities, Nuclear Sector
EPRI
2000 L Street, NW, Suite 805
Washington, DC 20036
gvine@epri.com

Mr. James Gresham, Manager
Regulatory Compliance and Plant Licensing
Westinghouse Electric Company
P.O. Box 355
Pittsburgh, PA 15230-0355
greshaja@westinghouse.com

Mr. Alexander Marion, Executive Director
Nuclear Operations & Engineering
Nuclear Energy Institute
1776 I Street, NW, Suite 400
Washington, DC 20006-3708
am@nei.org

Mr. Jay Thayer, Vice President
Nuclear Operations
Nuclear Energy Institute
1776 I Street, NW, Suite 400
Washington, DC 20006-3708
jkt@nei.org

Mr. John Butler, Director
Safety-Focused Regulation
Nuclear Energy Institute
1776 I Street, NW, Suite 400
Washington, DC 20006-3708
jcb@nei.org

Mike Melton, Senior Project Manager
1776 I Street, NW, Suite 400
Washington, DC 20006-3708
man@nei.org

Ms. Barbara Lewis
Assistant Editor
Platts, Principal Editorial Office
1200 G St., N.W., Suite 1100
Washington, DC 20005
Barbara_lewis@platts.com