

Mr. Oliver D. Kingsley, Jr.
 President, TVA Nuclear and
 Chief Nuclear Officer
 Tennessee Valley Authority
 6A Lookout Place
 1101 Market Street
 Chattanooga, Tennessee 37402-2801

August 11, 1997

SUBJECT: EVALUATION OF THE FIRST 10-YEAR INTERVAL INSPECTION PROGRAM PLAN
 REQUEST FOR RELIEF ISPT-07 FOR THE WATTS BAR NUCLEAR PLANT
 (TAC NO. M95440)

Dear Mr. Kingsley:

By letter dated May 9, 1996, the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) submitted request for relief number ISPT-07 regarding the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) Boiler and Pressure Vessel Code, Section XI, qualification requirements for VT-2 visual examiners. Request for Relief ISPT-07 is part of the present review by the staff of TVA's first ten-year interval inservice inspection (ISI) program plan and associated requests for relief for the Watts Bar Nuclear Plant (WBN). TVA requested that the review of Request for Relief ISPT-07 be expedited, because it is applicable to the 1997 fall outage. Additional information was provided by TVA in its letter dated March 24, 1997.

Currently, in accordance with the WBN ISI program, the Code requires that VT-2 visual examination personnel be qualified to comparable levels of competency as defined in American National Standards Institute N45.2.6. The Code also requires that the examination personnel be qualified for near and far distance vision acuity. In a letter dated May 9, 1996, as supplemented March 24, 1997, TVA proposed, as an alternative to the above requirements of the Code, the use of ASME Code Case N-546 which states requirements for VT-2 visual examiners.

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) staff, with technical assistance from its contractor, the Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory (INEEL), has reviewed the information provided in TVA's May 9, 1996 and March 24, 1997 letters. The NRC staff's safety evaluation and conclusions are contained in the Enclosure. Attached to the Enclosure is the INEEL Technical Letter Report. The staff finds that the use of Code Case N-546 provides an acceptable level of safety and quality. Accordingly, the staff authorizes the use of such alternative pursuant to 10 CFR 50.55a(a)(3)(i).

Sincerely,

Original signed by

Frederick J. Hebdon, Director
 Project Directorate II-3
 Division of Reactor Projects - I/II
 Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket No. 50-390

Enclosure: Safety Evaluation

cc w/enclosure: See next page

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