

February 12, 1998

Mr. O. J. Zeringue
Chief Nuclear Officer
and Executive Vice President
Tennessee Valley Authority
6A Lookout Place
1101 Market Street
Chattanooga, Tennessee 37402-2801

SUBJECT: RELIEF FROM ASME CODE REPAIR REQUIREMENTS FOR CANOPY SEAL
WELDS WATTS BAR NUCLEAR PLANT (TAC NO. M99677)

Dear Mr. Zeringue:

By letter dated September 20, as supplemented October 10, 1997, the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) submitted a request for relief from the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) Boiler and Pressure Vessel Code, Section XI repair requirements under 10 CFR 50.55a(a)(3)(i) for the Watts Bar Nuclear Plant, Unit 1. The request addressed repair of two reactor vessel lower canopy seal welds by weld buildup rather than the removal of the defects and performing a Code weld repair.

The NRC staff hereby grants the requested alternative pursuant to 10 CFR 50.55a(a)(3)(i), since it is authorized by law and will not endanger life, property, or the common defense and security and is otherwise in the public interest, giving due consideration in granting relief to the burden upon the licensee that could result if the ASME Code requirements were imposed on the facility.

The staff has reviewed the information provided in TVA's September 20 and October 10, 1997 letters. The staff's evaluation and conclusions are contained in the Enclosure. The staff finds that the alternate repair and inspection of the two lower canopy seal welds 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

DFD/

Docket No. 50-390

Enclosure: Safety Evaluation

cc w/enclosure: See next page

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UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Frederick J. Hebdon", is written over a horizontal line.

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

Docket No. 50-390

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Mr. O. J. Zeringue
Tennessee Valley Authority

WATTS BAR NUCLEAR PLANT

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