

November 28, 2007

Dr. Brian W. Sheron, Director
US Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Office of Nuclear Regulatory Research
Washington, D.C. 20555-0001

Dear Dr. Sheron:

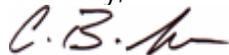
In our last update of the industry's ability to supply modern cladding alloys for LOCA and spent fuel testing (letter from David Modeen dated April 19, 2007), EPRI indicated that the AREVA M5 rods already at Argonne appear to be sufficient for the stated scope and that sources of Westinghouse ZIRLO and Optimized ZIRLO fuel were still being pursued.

Over the past month, we have been discussing the possibility of providing fuel from Catawba Nuclear Station with Duke Energy. Catawba is of interest for a number of reasons. It has both standard ZIRLO and Optimized ZIRLO at end of life burnups (54 to 55 GWd/MTU rod average). Optimized ZIRLO has shown improved performance relative to standard ZIRLO and is expected to make up the bulk of future fuel orders of Westinghouse fuel. Catawba is also planning for a hot cell shipment of MOX fuel in Fall 2008. The MOX shipment will go to ORNL, which could be very convenient if the LOCA integral testing is also performed at ORNL. We are currently confirming that an adequate number of ZIRLO rods can be added to the shipment, but that does not appear to be an issue. As you know, fuel shipments are very expensive and require a great deal of effort from the host utility, so leveraging an existing shipping plan is a big advantage.

At this point, we are continuing to resolve some of the details of this potential approach, but we appreciate any comments from your team on the fuel rods identified thus far. EPRI and Westinghouse are proposing to send a total of five or six rods, three Optimized ZIRLO and two or three standard ZIRLO. A list of proposed rods is attached.

Should you or your staff have any further questions, feel free to contact Kurt Edsinger (kedsinger@epri.com), manager of EPRI's Fuel Reliability Program.

Sincerely,



Chris Larsen

cc: Harold Scott, NRC-RES
David Mitchell, Westinghouse Electric Company
Shawn Gibby, Duke Energy

Proposed Fuel Rods from Catawba Nuclear Station
(note: contains unverified information)

Rod #	Cladding	Westinghouse Assembly Type (1)	Core Location	Rod Location (2)	Burnup (MWd/MTU)
1	Opt. ZIRLO	NGF	R3	M15	54,790
2	Opt. ZIRLO	NGF	R3	N12	54,589
3	Opt. ZIRLO	NGF	R3	L14	54,299
4	ZIRLO	RFA	R8	N5	54,299
5	ZIRLO	RFA	R8	<i>tbd</i>	<i>tbd</i>
6	ZIRLO	RFA	R8	<i>tbd(3)</i>	<i>tbd</i>

Notes:

1. NGF = Next Generation Fuel; RFA = Robust Fuel Assembly
2. Rod Location using Westinghouse nomenclature
3. A third ZIRLO-RFA rod is still to be confirmed