

January 16, 2012

Dr. Said Abdel-Khalik, Chairman
Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, DC 20555-0001

SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON REACTOR SAFEGUARDS
LETTER REGARDING RECOMMENDATIONS ON TOPICAL REPORT
NEDC-33173P, SUPPLEMENT 2, PARTS 1, 2, AND 3, "ANALYSIS OF GAMMA
SCAN DATA AND REMOVAL OF SAFETY LIMIT MINIMUM CRITICAL POWER
RATIO (SLMCPR) MARGIN"

Dear Dr. Abdel-Khalik:

I am responding to the Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards (ACRS or the Committee) letter dated December 12, 2011, documenting the Committee's most recent review of the staff's evaluation of General Electric-Hitachi Nuclear Energy Licensing Topical Report NEDC-33173P-A, Supplement 2, Parts 1, 2, and 3, "Analysis of Gamma Scan Data and Removal of Safety Limit Minimum Critical Power Ratio (SLMCPR) Margin." The staff of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission remains committed to working closely and cooperatively with the Committee to resolve the concerns presented in your letter (Agencywide Documents Access and Management System Accession No. ML11341A142).

The staff has reviewed the letter and accepts the Committee's recommendation that, for power-to-flow ratios above 42 MWth/Mlbm/hr, the SLMCPR additional margin be reduced only from 0.03 to 0.02, and the staff will address this in its final safety evaluation for the topical report. The staff agrees that this limitation on the reduction of the additional margin is prudent given the uncertainties in extrapolating beyond the range of the available data. The staff also agrees that further reductions in the added SLMCPR margin for MELLLA+ applications above power-to-flow ratios of 42 MWth/Mlbm/hr should be considered only when additional industry technical data become available.

Dr. Abdel-Khalik

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The staff intends to issue its final safety evaluation when it is complete. We appreciate the review, comments, and recommendations provided by the ACRS.

Sincerely,

/RA by Martin J. Virgilio for/

R. W. Borchardt
Executive Director
for Operations

cc: Chairman Jaczko
Commissioner Svinicki
Commissioner Apostolakis
Commissioner Magwood
Commissioner Ostendorff
SECY

Dr. Abdel-Khalik

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