



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

August 9, 2012

Mr. Kevin Walsh
Site Vice President
c/o Michael O'Keefe
Seabrook Station
NextEra Energy Seabrook, LLC
P.O. Box 300
Seabrook, NH 03874

SUBJECT: SEABROOK STATION, UNIT 1 – ACCEPTANCE LETTER REGARDING RELIEF REQUEST RELATED TO THE USE OF AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF MECHANICAL ENGINEERS *BOILER AND PRESSURE VESSEL CODE*, SECTION XI (TAC NO. ME9187)

Dear Mr. Walsh:

By letter dated August 1, 2012 (Agencywide Documents Access and Management System Accession No. ML12219A129), NextEra Energy Seabrook, LLC (NextEra) submitted a relief request to use an alternative to the requirements of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers *Boiler and Pressure Vessel Code* (ASME Code), Section XI at Seabrook Station, Unit 1 (Seabrook). NextEra plans to excavate and examine Class 3 Nuclear Service Water System buried piping in accordance with the requirements of the Seabrook Buried Piping Integrity Program. Should areas requiring repair be detected during these inspections, NextEra requests relief from ASME Code, Section XI, IWA 4400 requirements that defective portions of components be removed prior to performing a repair/replacement activity by welding.

The purpose of this letter is to provide the results of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) staff's acceptance review of this relief request. The acceptance review was performed to determine if there is sufficient technical information in scope and depth to allow the NRC staff to complete its detailed technical review. The acceptance review is also intended to identify whether the application has any readily apparent information insufficiencies in its characterization of the regulatory requirements or the licensing basis of the plant.

Pursuant to Sections 50.55a(a)(3)(i) and 50.55a(a)(3)(ii) of Title 10 of the *Code of Federal Regulations*, the applicant shall demonstrate that the proposed alternatives would provide an acceptable level of quality and safety, or that compliance with the specified requirements of Section 50.55a would result in hardship or unusual difficulty without a compensating increase in the level of quality or safety.

The NRC staff has reviewed your application and concluded that it does provide technical information in sufficient detail to enable the staff to proceed with its detailed technical review and make an independent assessment regarding the acceptability of the proposed relief request in terms of regulatory requirements and the protection of public health and safety and the environment. If additional information is needed for the NRC staff to complete its technical review, you will be advised by separate correspondence.

K. Walsh

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NextEra requested the NRC staff to review and approve this relief request by September 25, 2012, to support Seabrook's upcoming fall 2012 refueling outage.

The NRC performance goals for licensing actions are to complete 90-percent in less than 1 year and 100-percent in less than 2 years. For a variety of reasons, the NRC did not see significant budget growth during fiscal year 2012. In addition, the NRC has devoted significant resources to the actions related to the lessons learned from the Fukushima Dai'ichi nuclear incident. This reality requires the NRC staff to exercise greater self-discipline in the way the NRC manages its licensing resources to achieve its performance goals. Operating within a more constrained budget is likely to be difficult and stressful for the NRC staff.

The NRC staff will work diligently on this relief request; however, it is unlikely the NRC staff will complete its review by September 25, 2012.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (301) 415-3100.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John G. Lamb". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "L".

John G. Lamb, Senior Project Manager
Plant Licensing Branch I-2
Division of Operating Reactor Licensing
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket No. 50-443

cc: Distribution via Listserv

K. Walsh

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/ra/

John G. Lamb, Senior Project Manager
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