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CuadradoDeJesus, Samuel

From: Mitlyng, Viktoria *Bill*
Sent: Monday, December 05, 2011 8:44 AM
To: Briley, Thomas; Murphy, Martin; Cameron, Jamnes; Wilson, Adam; Kimble, Daniel; Rutkowski, John; Hills, David; Haskell, Russell; Nolan, Ryan; Mahoney, Michael; Hernandez, Pete; Chandrathil, Prema; Neurauter, James; Zimmerman, Jacob; Hoang, Dan; Logaras, Harral; Barker, Allan; Sheikh, Abdul; Snyder, Amy; Wiebe, Joel; Meghani, Vijay; Smagacz, Phillip; Riley (OCA), Timothy; Jessup, William; Graves, Herman; Sakai, Stacie; Manoly, Kamal; Rezai, Ali; Sanchez Santiago, Elba; Steffes, Jakob; Lupold, Timothy; Gonzalez, Hipolito; Thorp, John; CuadradoDeJesus, Samuel; Thomas, George; Auluck, Rajender; Lehman, Bryce; Morey, Dennis; Burza, Justine; Stone, AnnMarie; Hogan, Rosemary; Case, Michael; Richards, Stuart; Hiland, Patrick; Orth, Steven; Cheok, Michael; Boland, Anne; Loughheed, Patricia; Zerth, Marjorie
Cc: Shear, Gary; OBrien, Kenneth; West, Steven; Reynolds, Steven; Pederson, Cynthia; Uhle, Jennifer
Subject: Davis-Besse coverage

Regulators Will Allow Ohio Nuclear Plant To Reopen, Say Cracks Found In Concrete Not A Danger (AP)

Associated Press, December 2, 2011

OAK HARBOR, Ohio — Federal regulators will allow an Ohio nuclear reactor to reopen after being satisfied that cracks discovered in concrete at the plant don't pose a safety concern.

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission said Friday that the operator of the nuclear plant along Lake Erie has given them reasonable assurance that cracks found on the outside of the reactor containment building don't pose a safety threat.

The Davis-Besse (BEH'-see) plant outside Toledo was shut down in October for installation of the 82-ton reactor head. Soon afterward, crews discovered a 30-foot hairline crack in the outer wall.

Plant operator FirstEnergy Corp. says it will closely monitor the containment building and try to find out what led to the cracks.

Davis-Besse Allowed To Restart Operations (TOLB)

By David Patch

Toledo (OH) Blade, December 2, 2011

OAK HARBOR, Ohio — The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has given FirstEnergy a green light to restart the Davis-Besse nuclear power plant while ordering the company to investigate further the cause and extent of cracks discovered during October in the plant's concrete shield building.

In a "confirmatory action letter" to FirstEnergy Nuclear Operating Co., Cynthia Pederson, the NRC's acting regional administrator, wrote that her agency had been provided "reasonable assurance that the shield building is capable of performing its safety functions" despite the multiple hairline cracks discovered after a hole was cut in the concrete through which reactor heads were swapped out.

But the letter requires FirstEnergy to "provide the results of the root cause evaluation and corrective actions to the NRC, including any long-term monitoring requirements, by Feb. 28, 2012" and describes the nature of further testing necessary to determine if the cracks are spreading or widening.

Further study also will be required during a refueling outage scheduled for next year, Ms. Pederson wrote.

NRC also announced that a public meeting will be held, on a date and at a place to be determined, during which FirstEnergy will "discuss their technical analysis and explain why the plant is safe to continue to operate with the cracks in the shield building."

The commission said it would issue its own inspection report and conclusions about the plant on Jan. 16.

Jennifer Young, a FirstEnergy spokesman, confirmed that the re-start go-ahead had been received, but declined to say when Davis-Besse would be back on-line.

"We are wrapping up our outage activities, and beginning the re-start," Ms. Young said Friday.

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The Davis-Besse plant's reactor chamber is enclosed by a 1.5-inch thick steel containment vessel and the shield building, made of concrete 2.5 feet thick. Officials have described the shield building's primary role as protection of the plant against terrorism or natural disasters, but it also would provide secondary containment if the steel enclosure were breached.

FirstEnergy is in the midst of applying for an extension of Davis-Besse's operating license, which expires in 2017. Anti-nuclear activists have argued that the cracking concrete in the shield building is yet another reason, on top of the plant's troubled safety history, for Davis-Besse's license not to be renewed or, alternatively, to be extended for a shorter time than the 20-year extension FirstEnergy has requested.

A 30-foot, barely visible crack was discovered in "architectural concrete" adorning the outside of the Shield Building after workers used hydro-demolition — high-pressure water — Oct. 10 to cut the hole for the reactor-head exchange. Additional, similar cracks were later discovered during investigation.

Michael Keegan, one of several critics who have intervened in the re-licensing proceedings, called the Confirmatory Action Letter "a big fat nothing" and repeated his doubts about the wisdom of re-starting Davis-Besse.

The NRC's re-start approval, he said, is "a promise to kick the can down the road and roll the dice one more time. The concept of 'Use As Is,' when it comes to operating a nuclear power plant, is a risky proposition."

In a Nov. 21 letter to the NRC, US Rep. Dennis Kucinich (D., Cleveland) questioned the Shield Building's structural soundness in light of the crack and requested a hearing like the one the agency said it will hold — except that Mr. Kucinich wanted the hearing held before the plant's restart.

Business Briefs -- Dec. 2 (AKRONBJ)

Akron Beacon Journal, December 2, 2011

Business briefs -- Dec. 2

LOCAL BUSINESS

Davis-Besse cleared to restart

The US Nuclear Regulatory Commission on Friday said it had determined that FirstEnergy Corp.'s Davis-Besse nuclear power plant can safely restart. The NRC was informed on Oct. 10 by FirstEnergy Nuclear Operating Co. that it had identified cracks in the shield building while conducting work to replace the reactor vessel head. The NRC will schedule a public meeting to discuss the technical analysis. The agency has also issued a letter detailing the company's agreement to ensure the cracks do not affect safety in the future.

YRC stock adjusted

Nuclear Power Plant Safe To Restart, NRC Determines (PWRMAG)

Power Engineering Magazine, December 2, 2011

The US Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) said that the operators of the 913 MWe Davis-Besse nuclear power plant, FirstEnergy Nuclear Operating Corp. (FENOC), have provided "reasonable assurance" that the shield building is capable of performing its safety functions and that the utility can proceed with restarting the plant.

On Oct. 10, the NRC was informed by FENOC that while conducting work to replace the reactor vessel head, workers identified cracks in the shield building. The shield building is a 2.5 foot thick reinforced concrete building that surrounds a 1.5 inch thick steel containment vessel that encloses the reactor. The two buildings are separated by a 4.5 foot space.

The NRC said it's independent assessment evaluated a range of information such as technical details ranging from the size of the cracks, the utility's sampling and testing of the concrete in the building to determine the extent of the cracks, and its structural analysis.

The NRC, though, has issued a Confirmatory Action Letter (CAL) to FENOC. The CAL details and confirms FENOC's agreement to take certain actions to monitor and ensure the cracks in the shield building continue to not adversely impact safety going forward. The NRC will review and evaluate FENOC's actions in response to the CAL in order to make sure they are thorough and complete.

The FENOC commitments to the NRC include:

- Determine and provide the root cause of the cracks in the shield building, corrective actions, and develop a long-term monitoring program;
- Select multiple areas in the shield building that have no cracks but are adjacent to known cracks to determine whether the area of the cracks has spread;
- Perform additional analysis in known cracked areas to determine whether the width of the cracks has increased.

The NRC said it will continue to inspect whether the shield building in its current condition meets all design requirements in the plant's license. Failure to meet the commitments in the CAL may result in additional regulatory action if the utility does not provide reasonable assurance that the NRC can rely on the FENOC to meet the NRC's requirements and protect public health and safety.

WTVG-TV Toledo, Ohio (12/3, 9:54 a.m., EDT) broadcast, "Federal regulators are going to allow the Davis Besse plant to re-open. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission said that the plant's operator has given regulators reasonable assurance that cracks found on the outside of the reactor containment building doesn't pose a safety threat. Davis Besse closed in October for the installation of an 82 ton reactor head. Soon after that crews discovered a 30 foot hairline crack in the outer wall. First Energy says it will monitor the containment building to try to find what led to the crack." WTOL-TV Toledo, Ohio (12/3, 9:03 a.m., EDT) also covered this story.