Mr. Joseph E. Pollock, Executive Director  
Nuclear Energy Institute  
1776 I Street NW, Suite 400  
Washington, DC 20006-3708

SUBJECT: ELECTRIC POWER RESEARCH INSTITUTE FINAL DRAFT REPORT  
XXXXXX, "SEISMIC EVALUATION GUIDANCE: AUGMENTED APPROACH  
FOR THE RESOLUTION OF FUKUSHIMA NEAR-TERM TASK FORCE  
RECOMMENDATION 2.1: SEISMIC," AS AN ACCEPTABLE ALTERNATIVE TO  
THE MARCH 12, 2012, INFORMATION REQUEST FOR SEISMIC  
REEVALUATIONS

Dear Mr. Pollock:

On behalf of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), I am responding to the Nuclear Energy Institute's (NEI's) letter1 of April 9, 2013. Your letter included a discussion of the update to the central and eastern United States (CEUS) ground motion model (GMM); an attached final draft of Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI) Report, "Seismic Evaluation Guidance: Augmented Approach for the Resolution of Fukushima Near-Term Task Force Recommendation 2.1: Seismic" (hereafter referred to as the EPRI Guidance); and attached proposed schedules accounting for the GMM update, implementation of the EPRI Guidance, and seismic resource limitations.

The NEI letter indicates that industry intends to supplement its use of the staff-endorsed "Seismic Evaluation Guidance: Screening Prioritization and Implementation Details (SPID) for the Resolution of Fukushima Near-Term Task Force Recommendation 2.1: Seismic,"2 with proposed interim actions, as detailed in the EPRI Guidance. The SPID guidance was the product of significant interaction between the NRC, NEI, EPRI, and other stakeholders at numerous public meetings to support licensee responses to Enclosure 1 of the March 12, 2012, information request3 that was issued by the NRC pursuant to Title 10 of the Code of Federal Regulations (10 CFR) 50.54(f) (the 50.54(f) letter). As with the SPID guidance, the NRC, NEI, EPRI, and other stakeholders have interacted in several public meetings since November 2012 to discuss the EPRI Guidance document.

The staff has determined that the EPRI Guidance will provide an important demonstration of seismic margin and expedite plant safety enhancements through evaluations and potential near-term modifications of certain core and containment cooling equipment while more comprehensive plant seismic risk evaluations are being performed. The NRC staff has also determined that the schedule modifications provided in the NEI's April 9, 2013, letter are

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1 Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS) Accession No. ML13101A379.  
2 The SPID guidance document is found in ADAMS under Accession No. ML12333A170. The staff endorsement letter for the SPID guidance is found in ADAMS under Accession No. ML12319A074.  
3 The 50.54(f) letter is available in ADAMS under Accession No. ML12053A340.
acceptable since the schedule accounts for seismic resource limitations, EPRI's completion of
the update to the GMM for the CEUS, and implementation of the EPRI Guidance evaluations
and modifications.

Ground Motion Model

The 50.54(f) letter requested that those licensees whose plants are located in the CEUS use
NUREG-2115, "Central and Eastern United States Seismic Source Characterization for Nuclear
Facilities," and the appropriate EPRI (2004, 2006) GMM to characterize the seismic hazard for
their sites. Subsequent to the issuance of the 50.54(f) letter, industry informed the staff that it
had undertaken a study and determined that the EPRI (2004, 2006) GMM should be updated.
In order to facilitate its eventual review of the updated EPRI GMM, the staff has interacted with
NEI, EPRI, and other stakeholders in public meetings on industry's efforts to update the EPRI
GMM.

By letter dated January 31, 2013, NEI transmitted the EPRI draft document, "Draft – EPRI
(2004, 2006) Ground-Motion Model (GMM) Review Project" to the NRC, requesting review and
approval by February 27, 2013. For the update of its earlier GMM, EPRI used a significant
amount of additional data, conducted field investigations, and used more recent methods than
were previously available. In performing the GMM update, EPRI has also addressed the
concerns of an independent peer review panel, which is an important part of the Senior Seismic
Hazard Analysis Committee (SSHAC) guidelines (these guidelines are discussed in NRC's
NUREG-2117, "Practical Implementation Guidelines for SSHAC Level 3 and 4 Hazard Studies").

Following a review of the NEI submittal, in a public meeting on February 28, 2013, the staff
expressed concern with EPRI's treatment of uncertainty and the level of documentation in the
updated GMM. The staff formally documented these concerns by letter dated March 20, 2013.

Subsequently, in a public meeting on March 26, 2013, industry presented a revision of its
updated EPRI GMM, which demonstrated significant progress towards addressing the staff's
concerns with respect to the treatment of uncertainty. Industry also proposed a schedule,
including further interactions with NRC staff, for completing the development and documentation
of the updated EPRI GMM. In order to complete its update of the EPRI GMM and
accompanying documentation, and to allow time for the development of site seismic hazard
curves, industry proposed a six month delay from the schedule outlined in the 50.54(f) letter for
the submittal of the seismic hazard reevaluations for CEUS plants.

The staff agrees that updated models, methods, and data will provide licensees with the most
current information in order to perform the seismic hazard evaluations requested by the 50.54(f)
letter. The NRC staff intends to complete its review of the industry's updated CEUS GMM by

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4 Licensees whose sites are located in the western United States (WUS) were asked to develop a probabilistic seismic hazard analysis consistent with the process used for new reactor licensing under 10 CFR Part 52, "Licenses, Certifications, and Approvals for Nuclear Power Plants."
5 By letter dated August 24, 2012, at ADAMS Accession No. ML12240A034, the industry notified staff of its intent to proceed with Phase 2 of the GMM update project.
6 The letter can be found in ADAMS at Accession No. ML13059A090.
7 The meeting summary and presentation materials can be found in the package in ADAMS at Accession No. ML13106A158.
8 The letter can be found in ADAMS at Accession No. ML13078A029.
9 The meeting summary and presentation material can be found in the package in ADAMS at Accession No. ML13061A304.
August 30, 2013, if the industry submits the completed documentation of the updated model by June 30, 2013. If the staff is unable to approve the updated EPRI GMM by August 30, 2013, industry is expected to use the staff-approved EPRI (2004, 2006) GMM for the CEUS plant reevaluations.

EPRI Guidance

The EPRI Guidance document provides licensees with additional guidance on the performance of an Expedited Seismic Evaluation Process. The Expedited Seismic Evaluation Process is a screening, evaluation, and equipment modification process to be conducted by licensees to provide additional seismic margin and expedite plant safety enhancements for certain core and containment cooling components while more detailed and comprehensive plant seismic risk evaluations are being performed.

The Expedited Seismic Evaluation Process focuses on the equipment needed to maintain or restore reactor and containment cooling during the initial phase of a severe external event causing an extended loss of all alternating current power as identified in Order EA-12-049, “Order Modifying Licenses with Regard to Requirements for Mitigation Strategies for Beyond-Design-Basis External Events.” In response to the Order, NEI developed NEI 12-06, “Diverse and Flexible Coping Strategies (FLEX) Implementation Guide.” The Expedited Seismic Evaluation Process identifies a subset of FLEX Phase 1 equipment for evaluation and potential modification. This subset of FLEX equipment is installed core and containment cooling equipment and connection points needed during an extended station blackout event.

In particular, the guidance describes a methodology for the evaluation of the seismic capacity of the equipment identified in the Expedited Seismic Evaluation Process. If the seismic capacity of the equipment is inadequate relative to the reevaluated seismic demand, then the guidance provides equipment modification criteria. These modifications will provide additional assurance regarding maintenance of core and containment cooling during beyond-design-basis seismic events. In accordance with the guidance, licensees will submit the results of the evaluations, including required equipment modifications and their implementation schedule, in an Expedited Seismic Evaluation Process report for review by the NRC staff. The letter states that CEUS licensees will submit the reports resulting from the Expedited Seismic Evaluation Process by December 2014 and complete non-outage-related Expedited Seismic Evaluation Process equipment modifications by December 2016. Similarly, the letter states that the western United States (WUS) licensees will submit Expedited Seismic Evaluation Process reports by January 2016 and complete non-outage-related Expedited Seismic Evaluation Process equipment modifications by June 2018.

After review of industry’s proposed EPRI Guidance, the NRC staff believes that the evaluations and potential near-term equipment modifications associated with the Expedited Seismic Evaluation Process will provide an important demonstration of seismic margin and enhance plant safety while more detailed plant risk evaluations are being conducted by licensees. The

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10 The Order is available in ADAMS under Accession No. ML12054A736
11 The guidance is available in ADAMS under Accession No. ML12242A378.
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staff further concludes that the EPRI Guidance provides an appropriate methodology for licensees to implement and complete the Expedited Seismic Evaluation Process according to the schedule provided in the letter.

In accordance with the 50.54(f) letter, each licensee is to submit to the NRC its intention to follow the NRC-endorsed seismic reevaluation guidance (or SPID), or an alternative approach, 60 days after the issuance of the NRC-endorsed guidance. Licensees may use the EPRI Guidance, in addition to the SPID guidance, as an acceptable approach for responding to the information requested in Enclosure 1 of the 50.54(f) letter. Accordingly, the NRC staff’s issuance of this letter endorsing the EPRI Guidance is not considered backfitting, as defined in 10 CFR 50.109(a)(1).

The NRC requests that EPRI publish a final version of the EPRI Guidance within one month of receipt of this letter. The final version of the EPRI Guidance should incorporate this letter between the title page and the first section, and EPRI should remove the draft markings from the document.

Schedule Modification

As discussed above, the nuclear power industry has proposed two adjustments to the seismic hazard reevaluations at nuclear power plant sites: 1) to complete the update of the EPRI GMM for the CEUS, and 2) to implement the EPRI Guidance. These proposed changes affect the schedule outlined in the 50.54(f) letter.

First, the industry has requested additional time to complete the updated EPRI GMM project, including documentation and interactions with the NRC staff. The project documentation is scheduled to be submitted to the NRC on June 3, 2013. Pending approval by the staff, CEUS licensees will use the updated model to complete the site-specific seismic hazard evaluations specified in Enclosure 1 to the SPID guidance. Currently, the hazard submittals are requested by September 2013; however, the industry has requested to submit the hazard evaluations by March 31, 2014. The industry stated in its letter that it will not delay submittal of items 3.a. “Description of Subsurface Materials and Properties,” and 3.b. “Development of Base Case Profiles and Nonlinear Material Properties” of Section 4 of Enclosure 1 to the SPID guidance. Licensees intend to submit these items in September 2013 for the staff’s review. This will allow the staff to begin its review in accordance with the original schedule and complete a significant portion of the Section 4 review on time.

The staff finds that the schedule modifications discussed above for CEUS plants are acceptable because the updated GMM will provide the CEUS operating nuclear plant fleet with a model developed using the most recent data and methodologies available for their seismic hazard reevaluations. Additionally, the partial submittal in September 2013 will allow the staff to complete a portion of its review as originally scheduled by the 50.54(f) letter.

Second, the industry has requested modifications to the 50.54(f) letter schedule to allow for implementation of the Expedited Seismic Evaluation Process for those nuclear power plants where the reevaluated seismic hazard exceeds the plant’s design basis. These schedule modifications allow for completion of the Expedited Seismic Evaluation Process for CEUS plants
by December 2016, if the equipment modifications do not require a plant shutdown to access equipment. For WUS plants, the Expedited Seismic Evaluation Process modifications will be completed by June 2018, if the modifications do not require a plant shutdown to access equipment.

For plants requiring a seismic risk analysis, the 50.54(f) letter states that the staff will perform a prioritization for both the CEUS and WUS plants into two priority groups, and possibly a third, if needed. Under industry's proposed schedule, the higher priority CEUS plants will complete their risk evaluations by June 2017 (originally scheduled for October 2016). This delay is primarily due to the additional time needed to complete the EPRI GMM update project. The second group of CEUS plants will complete their risk evaluations by December 2019. This is about a two-year delay from the schedule specified in the 50.54(f) letter for the lower priority plants to complete their risk evaluations. Conversely, the letter proposes an earlier completion date of June 2017 for the risk evaluations for the higher priority WUS plants.

The staff finds that the schedule modifications discussed above for CEUS and WUS plants are acceptable, because the Expedited Seismic Evaluation Process provides for near-term seismic evaluations and expedited equipment modifications at the plants that will offer additional assurance that plants will operate safely during a beyond-design-basis seismic event. Furthermore, the schedule modifications account for limited seismic resources available to both the NRC and the industry. The schedule modifications provide for completion of the higher priority CEUS plant risk evaluations by the end of June 2017, which is not a significant extension of the original 50.54(f) letter schedule of October 2016. In addition, the schedule proposes an earlier completion date for the higher priority risk evaluations for the WUS plants.

The industry noted in its letter that if a large number of plants need to perform the risk evaluations, additional time may be needed which may extend the completion of some risk evaluations for a third tier of lower priority plants until December 2020. The NRC staff finds that the additional time to complete these lower priority plant risk evaluations is acceptable because limited seismic resources will likely impact the number of risk evaluations that can be completed by 2019.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the staff has determined that the proposed EPRI Guidance and the schedule modifications described in the NEI's April 9, 2013, letter are acceptable since they provide for implementation of the expedited interim actions and near-term plant safety enhancements, as well as EPRI's completion of the update to the GMM for the CEUS. The industry proposal also provides a reasonable approach and schedule which accounts for the considerable seismic resources needed to complete the seismic reevaluations.

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12 If outages are required, the plants are allowed two outages from the completion of the Expedited Seismic Evaluation Process report, which are to be submitted to the NRC staff for review by December 31, 2014.
If you or your staff have additional questions, please contact my office; alternatively, you can contact Mrs. Lisa Regner of my staff by phone at 301-415-1906, or by e-mail at Lisa.Regner@nrc.gov.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Eric J. Leeds, Director
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Enclosure:
Federal Register Notice

cc: See enclosed list
Listserv
POWER REACTOR LICENSEES AND HOLDERS OF CONSTRUCTION PERMITS IN ACTIVE OR DEFERRED STATUS

Arkansas Nuclear One
Entergy Operations, Inc.
Docket Nos. 50-313 and 50-368
License Nos. DPR-51 and NPF-6

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Docket Nos. 50-334 and 50-412
License Nos. DPR-66 and NPF-73

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Docket Nos. 50-259, 50-260 and 50-296
License Nos. DPR-33, DPR-52 and DPR-68

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Construction Permit Nos. CPPR-122 and CPPR-123

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License Nos. DPR-71 and DPR-62

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License Nos. NPF-35 and NPF-52

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Donald C. Cook Nuclear Plant
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License Nos. DPR-58 and DPR-74
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Crystal River Nuclear Generating Plant
Florida Power Corp.
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License Nos. NPF-4 and NPF-7

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Sequoyah Nuclear Plant
Tennessee Valley Authority
Docket Nos. 50-327 and 50-328
License Nos. DPR-77 and DPR-79

Mr. Joseph W. Shea
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Tennessee Valley Authority
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Shearon Harris Nuclear Power Plant
Carolina Power & Light Co.
Docket No. 50-400
License No. NPF-63

Mr. George T. Hamrick
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Carolina Power and Light Company
Shearon Harris Nuclear Power Plant
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South Texas Project
STP Nuclear Operating Co.
Docket Nos. 50-498 and 50-499
License Nos. NPF-76 and NPF-80

Mr. Dennis L. Koehl
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South Texas Project Electric Generating Station
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St. Lucie Plant
Florida Power & Light Co.
Docket Nos. 50-335 and 50-389
License Nos. DPR-67 and NPF-16

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Surry Power Station
Virginia Electric & Power Co.
Docket Nos. 50-280 and 50-281
License Nos. DPR-32 and DPR-37

Mr. David A. Heacock
President and Chief Nuclear Officer
Dominion Nuclear
Virginia Electric & Power Company
Innsbrook Technical Center
5000 Dominion Boulevard
Glen Allen, VA 23060-6711

Susquehanna Steam Electric Station
PPL Susquehanna, LLC
Docket Nos. 50-387 and 50-388
License Nos. NPF-14 and NPF-22

Mr. Timothy S. Rausch
Senior Vice President and Chief Nuclear Officer
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Three Mile Island, Unit 1
Exelon Nuclear
Docket No. 50-289
License No. DPR-50

Mr. Michael J. Pacillo
Senior Vice President
Exelon Generation Company, LLC
President and Chief Nuclear Office (CNO)
Exelon Nuclear
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Warrenville, IL 60555

Turkey Point
Florida Power & Light Co.
Docket Nos. 50-250 and 50-251
License Nos. DPR-31 and DPR-41

Mr. Mano Nazar
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NextEra Energy
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700 Universe Boulevard
Juno Beach, FL 33408-0420

Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Station
Entergy Nuclear Operations, Inc.
Docket No. 50-271
License No. DPR-28

Site Vice President, Operations
Entergy Nuclear Operations, Inc.
Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Station
P.O. Box 250, Governor Hunt Road
Vernon, VT 05354

Virgil C. Summer Nuclear Station
South Carolina Electric & Gas Co.
Docket No. 50-395
License No. NPF-12

Mr. Thomas D. Gatlin
Vice President Nuclear Operations
South Carolina Electric & Gas Company
Virgil C. Summer Nuclear Station
Post Office Box 88, Mail Code 800
Jenkinsville, SC 29065

Vogtle Electric Generating Plant
Southern Nuclear Operating Co.
Docket Nos. 50-424 and 50-425
License Nos. NPF-68 and NPF-81

Mr. C.R. Pierce
Regulatory Affairs Director
Southern Nuclear Operating Co., Inc.
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Waterford Steam Electric Station
Entergy Operations, Inc.
Docket No. 50-382
License No. NPF-38

Vice President, Operations
Entergy Operations, Inc.
Waterford Steam Electric Station, Unit 3
17265 River Road
Killona, LA 70057-0751

Watts Bar Nuclear Plant, Units 1 and 2
Watts Bar Nuclear Plant, Unit 1
Tennessee Valley Authority
Docket No. 50-390
License No. NPF-90

Watts Bar Nuclear Plant, Unit 2
Tennessee Valley Authority
Docket No. 50-391
Construction Permit No. CPPR No. 092

Mr. Joseph W. Shea
Chief Nuclear Officer and Executive Vice
President
Tennessee Valley Authority
1101 Market Street
Chattanooga, TN 37402-2801
William B. McGuire Nuclear Station
Duke Energy Carolinas, LLC
Docket Nos. 50-369 and 50-370
License Nos. NPF-9 and NPF-17

Mr. Steven D. Capps
Duke Energy Carolinas, LLC
McGuire Nuclear Station
12700 Hagers Ferry Road
Huntersville, NC 28078-8985

Wolf Creek Generating Station
Wolf Creek Nuclear Operating Corp.
Docket No. 50-482
License No. NPF-42

Mr. Matthew W. Sunseri
President and Chief Executive Officer
Wolf Creek Nuclear Operating Corporation
P.O. Box 411
Burlington, KS 66839
AGENCY: U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

ACTION: Endorsement letter, issuance.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is issuing an endorsement letter of Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI) Report, “Seismic Evaluation Guidance: EPRI Guidance for the Resolution of Fukushima Near-Term Task Force Recommendation 2.1: Seismic,” Draft Report, hereafter referred to as the EPRI Guidance. This EPRI Guidance provides additional information, to be used in combination with the staff-endorsed Screening Prioritization and Implementation Details (SPID) report¹, on an acceptable strategy to implement interim actions in accordance with item (6) of the Requested Information in Enclosure 1 “Recommendation 2.1: Seismic,” of the NRC staff’s request for information (50.54(f) letter), “Request for Information Pursuant to Title 10 of the Code of Federal Regulations (10 CFR), Part 50.54(f) Regarding Recommendations 2.1, 2.3, and 9.3, of the Near-Term Task Force Review of Insights from the Fukushima Dai-ichi Accident,” dated March 12, 2012. In addition, in its April 9, 2013 letter², the Nuclear Energy Institute (NEI) requested modifications to the schedule

¹ The SPID report is available in the NRC’s Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS) under Accession No. ML12333A170. The staff endorsement letter for the SPID report is available in ADAMS under Accession No. ML12319A074.
² The NEI letter, with attachments, is available in ADAMS in a package with Accession No. ML13101A345.
established in the staff's 50.54(f) letter. The NRC staff has found the schedule modifications to be acceptable since they account for completion of the EPRI central and eastern United States (CEUS) ground motion model (GMM) update, completion of potential interim actions provided in the EPRI Guidance, and limited available seismic resources.

**ADDRESSES:** You may access information related to this document, which the NRC possesses and is publicly available, by searching on [http://www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov) under Docket ID NRC-2013-0038.

- **Federal Rulemaking Web site:** Go to [http://www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov) and search for Docket ID NRC-2013-0038. Address questions about NRC dockets to Carol Gallagher; telephone: 301-492-3668; e-mail: Carol.Gallagher@nrc.gov.

- **NRC's Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS):** You may access publicly-available documents online in the NRC Library at [http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html](http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html). To begin the search, select "ADAMS Public Documents" and then select "Begin Web-based ADAMS Search." For problems with ADAMS, please contact the NRC's Public Document Room (PDR) reference staff at 1-800-397-4209, 301-415-4737, or by e-mail to PDR.Resources@nrc.gov. The NRC staff's endorsement letter of the EPRI Guidance is available under ADAMS Accession No. ML13106A331. The NRC staff's request for information dated March 12, 2012, is available under ADAMS Accession No. ML12053A340.

- **NRC's PDR:** You may examine and purchase copies of public documents at the NRC's PDR, Room O1-F21, One White Flint North, 11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland 20852.
SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Background Information

Pursuant to 10 CFR Part 50.54(f), the NRC issued a 50.54(f) letter dated March 12, 2012, regarding Recommendations 2.1, 2.3, and 9.3, of the Near-Term Task Force (NTTF) Review of Insights from the Fukushima Dai-ichi Accident. The NRC issued the 50.54(f) letter following the staff's evaluation of the earthquake and tsunami, and resulting nuclear accident, at the Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear power plant in March 2011. Enclosure 1 to the 50.54(f) letter requests licensees and holders of construction permits under 10 CFR Part 50, "Domestic Licensing of Production and Utilization Facilities," to reevaluate the seismic hazards at their sites using present-day NRC requirements and guidance, and to identify actions taken or planned to address plant-specific vulnerabilities associated with the updated seismic hazards. Based on this information, the NRC staff will determine if additional regulatory actions are necessary to protect against the updated hazards.

By letter dated February 15, 2013, the NRC staff issued an endorsement letter, with clarifications, of EPRI-1025287, "Seismic Evaluation Guidance: Screening, Prioritization, and Implementation Details (SPID) for the Resolution of Fukushima Near-Term Task Force Recommendation 2.1: Seismic," referred to as the SPID report. This SPID report describes

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3 The NTTF Report is available under ADAMS Accession No. ML111861807. The 50.54(f) letter is available under ADAMS Accession No. ML12053A340.
strategies for the screening, prioritization, and implementation of seismic risk evaluations that
are acceptable to the NRC staff, and will assist nuclear power reactor licensees when
responding to Enclosure 1 of the 50.54(f) letter.

By letter dated April 9, 2013, the NEI submitted additional guidance to be used to
supplement the SPID report for NRC endorsement. The letter also documented the industry's
proposed plan to update the GMM for CEUS plants, and proposed modifications to the schedule
for plant seismic reevaluations established in the 50.54(f) letter. The NEI letter, the EPRI
Guidance, and additional attachments addressing proposed schedule changes are available in
ADAMS under package Accession No. ML13101A345.

II. Ground Motion Model

The 50.54(f) letter requested that the licensees whose plants are located in the CEUS
use NUREG-2115, "Central and Eastern United States [CEUS] Seismic Source Characterization
for Nuclear Facilities" and the appropriate EPRI (2004, 2006) GMM to characterize the seismic
hazard for their sites. The industry is currently completing a study to update the EPRI (2004,
2006) GMM based on current data and new ground motion prediction equations developed by
seismic experts.

The NRC staff has interacted with NEI, EPRI, and other stakeholders in public meetings
since November 2012, for status updates on industry's efforts to update the CEUS GMM. By
letter dated January 31, 2013, the NEI transmitted the EPRI draft document, "Draft – EPRI
(2004, 2006) Ground Motion Model (GMM) Review Project" to the NRC, requesting review and
approval by February 27, 2013. For the update of its earlier GMM, EPRI used a significant
amount of additional data, conducted field investigations, and used more recent methods than
were previously available. In performing the GMM update, EPRI has also addressed the
concerns of an independent peer review panel, which is an important part of the Senior Seismic Hazard Analysis Committee (SSHAC) guidelines (these guidelines are discussed in NRC’s NUREG 2117, “Practical Implementation Guidelines for SSHAC Level 3 and 4 Hazard Studies”). Following a review of the NEI submittal, in a public meeting on February 28, 2013, the staff expressed concern with EPRI’s treatment of uncertainty and the level of documentation in the proposed updated GMM. The staff formally documented these concerns by letter dated March 20, 2013.

Subsequently, in a public meeting on March 26, 2013, industry presented a revision of its updated EPRI GMM, which demonstrated significant progress toward addressing the staff’s concerns with respect to the treatment of uncertainty. Industry also proposed a schedule, including further interactions with NRC staff, for completing the development and documentation of the updated EPRI GMM. In order to complete its update of the EPRI GMM and accompanying documentation, and to allow time for the development of site-specific seismic hazard curves, industry proposed a 6 month delay from the schedule outlined in the 50.54(f) letter for the submittal of the seismic hazard reevaluations for CEUS plants.

The staff agrees that updated models, methods, and data will provide licensees with the most current information in order to perform the seismic hazard evaluations requested by the 50.54(f) letter.

**III. EPRI Guidance**

The EPRI Guidance document provides licensees with information on the performance of an Expedited Seismic Evaluation Process. The Expedited Seismic Evaluation Process is a screening, evaluation, and equipment modification process to be conducted by licensees to
provide additional seismic margin and expedite plant safety enhancements while more detailed and comprehensive plant seismic risk evaluations are being performed.

The Expedited Seismic Evaluation Process evaluations would be conducted on plants with a new seismic hazard that exceeds their current seismic design basis, and necessary modifications would be made to certain core and containment cooling components used during the initial plant coping time following a severe external event. The letter states that CEUS licensees will complete non-outage-related Expedited Seismic Evaluation Process equipment modifications by December 2016. Western United States (WUS) licensees will complete non-outage-related Expedited Seismic Evaluation Process equipment modifications by June 2018.

After review of industry's proposed EPRI Guidance, the NRC staff believes that the evaluations and potential near-term equipment modifications associated with the Expedited Seismic Evaluation Process will provide an important demonstration of seismic margin and enhance plant safety while more detailed plant risk evaluations are being conducted by licensees. The staff further concludes that the seismic evaluation guidance for the EPRI Guidance provides an appropriate methodology for licensees to implement and complete the Expedited Seismic Evaluation Process according to the schedule provided in the letter.

IV. Schedule Modifications

The NEI has proposed two adjustments to the seismic hazard reevaluations at nuclear power plant sites: (1) to complete the update of the EPRI GMM for the CEUS, and (2) to implement the EPRI Guidance. These proposed changes affect the schedule outlined in the 50.54(f) letter.

First, the industry has requested additional time to complete the updated EPRI GMM project, including documentation and interactions with the NRC staff. The project
documentation is scheduled to be submitted to the NRC on June 3, 2013. Pending approval by the staff, the CEUS licensees will use the updated model to complete the site-specific seismic hazard reevaluations specified in Enclosure 1 to the SPID guidance. Currently, the hazard submittals are requested by September 2013; however, industry has requested to submit the hazard evaluations by March 31, 2014. The industry stated in its letter that it will not delay submittal of items 3.a. “Description of Subsurface Materials and Properties,” and 3.b. “Development of Base Case Profiles and Nonlinear Material Properties” of Section 4 of Enclosure 1 to the SPID guidance. Licensees intend to submit these items in September 2013 for the staff’s review. This will allow the staff to begin its review in accordance with the original schedule and complete a significant portion of the Section 4 review on time.

The staff finds that the schedule modifications discussed above for CEUS plants are acceptable because the updated GMM will provide the CEUS operating nuclear plant fleet with a model developed using the most recent data and methodologies available for their seismic hazard reevaluations. Additionally, the partial submittal in September 2013 will allow the staff to complete a portion of its CEUS review as originally scheduled by the 50.54(f) letter.

Second, the industry has requested modifications to the 50.54(f) letter schedule to allow for implementation of the EPRI Guidance interim actions for those nuclear power plants where the reevaluated seismic hazard exceeds the plant’s design basis. These schedule modifications allow for completion of Expedited Seismic Evaluation Process for CEUS plants by December 2016, if the modifications do not require a plant shutdown to access equipment. For WUS plants, the Expedited Seismic Evaluation Process modifications will be completed by June 2018, if the modifications do not require a plant shutdown to access equipment.

For plants requiring a seismic risk analysis (i.e., those with a reevaluated seismic hazard that exceeds the current seismic design basis), the 50.54(f) letter states that the staff will perform a prioritization for both the CEUS and WUS plants into two priority groups, and possibly
a third, if needed. Under industry’s proposed schedule, the higher priority CEUS plants will complete their risk evaluations by June 2017 (originally scheduled for October 2016). This delay is primarily due to the additional time needed to complete the EPRI GMM update project. The second group of CEUS plants will complete their risk evaluations by December 2019. This is about a two-year delay from the schedule specified in the 50.54(f) letter for the lower priority plants to complete their risk evaluations. Conversely, the letter proposes an earlier completion date of June 2017 for the risk evaluations for the higher priority WUS plants.

The staff finds that the schedule modifications discussed above for CEUS and WUS nuclear power plants are acceptable, since the Expedited Seismic Evaluation Process provides for near-term seismic evaluations and expedited equipment modifications at the plants that will offer additional assurance that plants will operate safely during a beyond design basis seismic event. Furthermore, the schedule modifications account for limited seismic resources available to both the NRC and the industry. The schedule modifications provide for completion of the higher priority CEUS plant risk evaluations by the end of June 2017, which is not a significant extension of the original 50.54(f) letter schedule of October 2016. In addition, the schedule proposes an earlier completion date for the higher priority risk evaluations for the WUS plants.

V. Basis for Endorsement

The NRC staff interacted with the stakeholders on development of the EPRI Guidance report with a focus on guidance on potential interim actions to be implemented for plants where the reevaluated seismic hazard exceeds the current seismic design basis. The EPRI Guidance report is the product of considerable interaction between the NRC, NEI, EPRI, and other
stakeholders at five public meetings\textsuperscript{4} over a 5-month period. These interactions and the insights gained from the meetings allowed for the development of this document in a very short time frame. The meetings helped develop the expectations for how licensees would perform potential interim actions after updating their seismic hazard information. At each meeting, the NRC staff provided its comments on the current version of the EPRI Guidance and discussed with stakeholders subsequent proposed revisions to the document. This iterative process, over several months, resulted in the final version of the document. The NRC staff's endorsement of the EPRI Guidance is based on this cumulative development process resulting from the interactions between stakeholders and the NRC staff. This is the same process employed successfully in the development of the SPID guidance.

The staff has determined that the EPRI Guidance will provide an important demonstration of seismic margin and enhanced plant safety through evaluations and potential near-term modifications of certain core and containment cooling equipment while more comprehensive plant seismic risk evaluations are being performed. The NRC staff also has determined that the schedule modifications provided in the NEI's April 9, 2013, letter are acceptable because the schedule accounts for seismic resource limitations, EPRI's completion of the update to the GMM for the CEUS, and implementation of the EPRI Guidance evaluations and actions.

\section*{VI. Backfitting and Issue Finality}

This endorsement letter does not constitute backfitting as defined in 10 CFR 50.109, "Backfitting" (the Backfit Rule). This endorsement letter provides additional guidance on an

\textsuperscript{4} Public meetings were held on November 2 and 14 and December 13, 2012; and February 14 and March 26, 2013

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acceptable method for implementing the interim actions described in item (6) of the Requested Information in Enclosure 1, “Recommendation 2.1: Seismic,” of the 50.54(f) letter. Licensees and construction permit holders may voluntarily use the guidance in the EPRI Guidance to comply with the requested interim action portion of the 50.54(f) letter. Methods, analyses, or solutions that differ from those described in the EPRI Guidance report may be deemed acceptable if they provide sufficient basis and information for the NRC staff to verify that the proposed alternative is acceptable.

VII. Congressional Review Act

This endorsement letter is a rule as designated in the Congressional Review Act (5 U.S.C. 801-808). The Office of Management and Budget has found that this is a major rule in accordance with the Congressional Review Act.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 7th day of May 2013.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission

Eric J. Leeds, Director
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation
If you or your staff have additional questions, please contact my office; alternatively, you can contact Mrs. Lisa Regner of my staff by phone at 301-415-1906, or by e-mail at Lisa.Regner@nrc.gov.

Sincerely,

/ra/
Eric J. Leeds, Director
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

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SUBJECT: ELECTRIC POWER RESEARCH INSTITUTE FINAL DRAFT REPORT
XX, "SEISMIC EVALUATION GUIDANCE: AUGMENTED APPROACH FOR THE RESOLUTION OF FUKUSHIMA NEAR-TERM TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATION 2.1: SEISMIC" AS ACCEPTABLE ALTERNATIVE TO THE MARCH 12, 2012, INFORMATION REQUEST FOR SEISMIC REEVALUATIONS

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