



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

December 11, 2013

Mr. Larry Meyer
Site Vice President
NextEra Energy Point Beach, LLC
Point Beach Nuclear Plant, Units 1 & 2
6610 Nuclear Road
Two Rivers, WI 54241-9516

SUBJECT: POINT BEACH NUCLEAR PLANT, UNIT 1 – RELAXATION OF THE SCHEDULAR REQUIREMENTS OF ORDER EA-12-049 “ISSUANCE OF ORDER TO MODIFY LICENSES WITH REGARD TO REQUIREMENTS FOR MITIGATION STRATEGIES FOR BEYOND DESIGN BASIS EXTERNAL EVENTS”

Dear Mr. Meyer:

By letter dated March 12, 2012 (Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS) Accession No. ML12054A735), the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) ordered NextEra Energy Point Beach, LLC (the licensee), to take certain actions at Point Beach Nuclear Plant, Units 1 and 2, associated with the Fukushima Near-Term Task Force Recommendations. Order EA-12-049 directed that actions be taken by licensees to develop and implement strategies to maintain or restore core cooling, containment, and spent fuel pool (SFP) cooling capabilities during beyond-design-basis external events.

Section IV of the order states, “As applicable, the Director, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation or the Director, Office of New Reactors may, in writing, relax or rescind any of the above conditions upon demonstration by the Licensee or [construction permit] holder of good cause.” By letter dated September 12, 2013 (ADAMS Accession No. ML13256A063), you submitted a request for relaxation of the schedule requirement for full implementation for Point Beach Nuclear Plant, Unit 1, as prescribed in Section IV A.2 of NRC Order EA-12-049. That requirement states, in part, “All holders of operating licenses issued under Part 50 . . . shall complete full implementation no later than two (2) refueling cycles after submittal of the overall integrated plan, as required in Condition C.1.a, or December 31, 2016, whichever comes first.”

You stated in your request that the first refueling outage after the submittal of the overall integrated plan for Point Beach Nuclear Plant, Unit 1 (Unit 1), started March 18, 2013, and the second refueling outage for Unit 1 will commence in October 2014. Therefore, consistent with the schedule requirements of Order EA-12-049, full implementation of the mitigating strategies for Unit 1 must be completed prior to startup from the October 2014 refueling outage. You requested that the required date for full implementation for Unit 1 be relaxed until the refueling outage beginning in May 2016, reflecting an extension of one additional refueling cycle.

In your September 12, 2013, letter, you provided several reasons in support of your relaxation request for Unit 1. As currently specified by the order, the available time to implement the requirements at Unit 1 would be limited to roughly 18 months. Some of the more complex mitigation strategies described in the Point Beach Nuclear Plant integrated plan, such as modifications to install auxiliary feedwater system unit cross connections, may require more extensive analysis and planning, due to the two-unit design and the consideration of common structures, systems, and components.

Also, the NRC staff and the industry are continuing to assess a number of generic issues, including the Westinghouse SHIELD passive thermal shutdown seal design for reactor coolant pump (RCP) seals, which the licensee plans to install at Point Beach. The reliance on low-leakage RCP seals is a key element of Point Beach's mitigation strategies. The resolution of the associated technical issues may require additional analytical work and/or changes to the existing strategies, which could impact the schedules for installation of the modifications and full implementation of those strategies.

In light of the facts presented, the NRC staff has determined that the licensee has presented good cause for a relaxation of the order implementation date. The planned modifications at Point Beach Nuclear Plant, such as the cross connection capabilities for the auxiliary feedwater system and the RCP seal design, are significant actions intended to enhance the licensee's capability to cope with a beyond-design-basis external event. Such projects require detailed design work, an allowance for the time needed to specify and procure materials, and time to perform the modifications in a manner that does not impact plant safety. The NRC staff also considered that, following the accident at Fukushima Dai-ichi, the NRC concluded that a sequence of events such as the Fukushima Dai-ichi accident is unlikely to occur in the United States, based on the current regulatory requirements and existing plant capabilities. Therefore, the extension of time for an additional refueling outage for Unit 1 to achieve full implementation of the requirements of the mitigation strategies order is justified. Given the plant-specific circumstances at Point Beach Nuclear Plant, Unit 1, completion before December 2016 is consistent with the intent of the order. The NRC staff approves the relaxation of the order implementation date.

L. Meyer

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Accordingly, based upon the authority granted to the Director, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation, the requirement of the order for full order implementation for Point Beach Nuclear Plant, Unit 1, is relaxed until the completion of the May 2016 refueling outage. The licensee did not request relaxation of the requirement for full order implementation for Point Beach Nuclear Plant, Unit 2, so that requirement, for full implementation by the completion of the Unit 2 October 2015 refueling outage, is unchanged.

If you have any questions, please contact Randy Hall, at 301-415-4032.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric J. Leeds". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "E" and "L".

Eric J. Leeds, Director
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket No. 50-483

cc: Listserv

L. Meyer

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Accordingly, based upon the authority granted to the Director, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation, the requirement of the order for full order implementation for Point Beach Nuclear Plant, Unit 1, is relaxed until the completion of the May 2016 refueling outage. The licensee did not request relaxation of the requirement for full order implementation for Point Beach Nuclear Plant, Unit 2, so that requirement, for full implementation by the completion of the Unit 2 October 2015 refueling outage, is unchanged.

If you have any questions, please contact Randy Hall, at 301-415-4032.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Eric J. Leeds, Director
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket No. 50-483

cc: Listserv

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