



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

December 23, 2014

Mr. Joseph W. Shea
Vice President, Nuclear Licensing
Tennessee Valley Authority
1101 Market Street, LP 3D-C
Chattanooga, TN 37402-2801

SUBJECT: BROWNS FERRY NUCLEAR PLANT, UNITS 2 AND 3 – RELAXATION OF THE SCHEDULE REQUIREMENTS FOR ORDER EA-12-049 “ISSUANCE OF ORDER TO MODIFY LICENSES WITH REGARD TO REQUIREMENTS FOR MITIGATION STRATEGIES FOR BEYOND-DESIGN-BASIS EXTERNAL EVENTS” (TAC NOS. MF0903 AND MF0904)

Dear Mr. Shea:

By letter dated March 12, 2012 (Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS) Accession No. ML12054A735), the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) ordered Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA, the licensee) to take certain actions at Browns Ferry Nuclear Plant (BFN) 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, reactor coolant system inventory, containment cooling, and spent fuel pool cooling capabilities during beyond-design-basis external events (BDBEEs). By letter dated March 12, 2012 (ADAMS Accession No. ML12054A694), the NRC ordered TVA to install a reliable hardened containment vent system at BFN via Order EA-12-050. By letter dated June 6, 2013 (ADAMS Accession No. ML13143A321), the NRC superseded the requirements of Order EA-12-050, with Order EA-13-109, which requires the installation of reliable hardened containment vents capable of operation under severe accident conditions. The compliance date requirements of Order EA-13-109, Phase I (wetwell vent), extend beyond those of Order EA-12-049 for BFN.

Section IV of Order EA-12-049 states that licensees proposing to deviate from requirements of the order may request that the Director, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation, relax or rescind certain requirements. By letter dated August 28, 2014 (ADAMS Accession No. ML14247A447), the licensee requested schedule relaxation from the final compliance date of Order EA-12-049. Specifically, the licensee requested an extension of one refueling cycle for BFN, Units 2 and 3 to complete full implementation of the hardened severe accident capable containment wetwell vent. The extension request was proposed because the installation of a containment wetwell vent that meets the requirements of Order EA-13-109, Phase I, will take additional time to complete, as compared to the compliance date associated with Order EA-12-049.

To allow the time to design and install the severe accident capable hardened containment wetwell vent, and integrate it into the mitigating strategies required for Order EA-12-049, the licensee requests relaxation of the Order EA-12-049 full implementation date from the completion of the spring 2015 refueling outage for BFN Unit 2 to the completion of the spring 2017 refueling outage, and from the completion of the spring 2016 refueling outage for BFN Unit 3 to the completion of the spring 2018 refueling outage.

In light of the facts presented in the licensee's letter dated August 28, 2014, the NRC staff has determined that the licensee has presented good cause for a relaxation of the order implementation date. The licensee proposes that the equipment and modifications required to implement the mitigating strategies required by Order EA-12-049 will be completed and available for use in accordance with the original implementation schedule requirements, except for the primary containment venting strategy. Until the full containment wetwell venting capability required by Order EA-13-109 is implemented, BFN Units 2 and 3 will maintain the containment venting capability previously installed in response to NRC Generic Letter 89-16, "Installation of a Hardened Wetwell Vent". By completing the specified plant configuration changes (other than the severe accident capable containment wetwell vent), and maintaining the ability to vent containment in accordance with existing procedures, the majority of the desired increase in capability to respond to a BDBEE will be realized within the timeframe specified in Order EA-12-049. The requested extension allows the licensee sufficient time to install the enhanced containment wetwell vent capability necessary for full Order EA-12-049 compliance within an appropriate amount of time. 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. The NRC staff therefore approves the relaxation of the order implementation date.

Accordingly, based upon the authority granted to the Director, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation, the requirement of the order for full implementation is relaxed until the completion of the spring 2017 refueling outage for BFN Unit 2 and the spring 2018 refueling outage for BFN Unit 3 to allow the licensee sufficient time to implement a severe accident capable hardened containment wetwell vent.

If you have any questions, please contact Tony Brown at 301-415-1924.

Sincerely,



William M. Dean, Director
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket Nos. 50-260 and 50-296

cc: Listserv

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If you have any questions, please contact Tony Brown at 301-415-1924.

Sincerely,
/RA/

William M. Dean, Director
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

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