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Tremaine Donnell
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U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, DC 20555-0001

SUBJECT: Duke Energy Comments on Proposed Information Collection, NRC Generic Letter 2015-XX, Monitoring of Neutron-Absorbing Materials in Spent Fuel Pools (Docket ID NRC-2015-0136)

Dear Tremaine Donnell:

On June 4, 2015 an information collection request was published in Federal Register Notice (*80 Fed. Reg. 31930*) docketed (*Docket ID NRC-2015-0136*). In this information collection request, the NRC requested comment on four specific questions regarding the Generic Letter 2015-XX, *Monitoring of Neutron-Absorbing Materials in Spent Fuel Pools*. Attachment 1 to this letter provides Duke Energy's comments addressing these questions.

No new commitments have been made in this submittal. If you have additional questions, please call Art Zaremba at 980-373-2062.

Sincerely,

M. Christopher Nolan
Director - Nuclear Regulatory Affairs

Attachments: 1. Duke Energy Response to 80 FR 31930

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bcc: (all with Attachments/Enclosures unless otherwise noted)

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Duke Energy Response to 80 FR 31930

Subject: Duke Energy Comments on Proposed Information Collection, NRC Generic Letter 2015-XX, Monitoring of Neutron-Absorbing Materials in Spent Fuel Pools (Docket ID NRC-2015-0136)

Duke Energy appreciates the opportunity to provide comments and feedback regarding the proposed information collection discussed in NRC Generic Letter 2015-XX, *Monitoring of Neutron-Absorbing Materials in Spent Fuel Pools*. Duke Energy recognizes that some feedback from the Nuclear Energy Institute (NEI) and NRC ACRS has been incorporated into the Generic Letter, which will help us direct our efforts to responses for our plants where neutron absorbers are credited in the nuclear criticality safety analyses.

While the tiered approach implemented in the Generic Letter will allow us to provide a shortened response for several of our sites, we still believe the estimated burden for other sites' responses to the Generic Letter is greatly under-estimated.

Feedback from Duke Energy on the four specific questions posed in the Federal Register notice are provided as follows:

- 1) Is the proposed collection of information necessary for the NRC to properly perform its functions? Does the information have practical utility?

There are still aspects of the Generic Letter that do not appear necessary to allow the NRC to perform its functions. For instance, sites where credit is taken for Boraf neutron absorber in the nuclear criticality safety (NCS) analysis of record (AOR) are required to report quite extensive and detailed information about the characteristics of the absorbers when installed and in their current state, even though there is a lack of evidence that this material has experienced any kind of degradation that would impact its ability to function as intended in the licensing basis for these sites.

- 2) Is the estimate of the burden of the information collection accurate?

According to the draft Generic Letter, the estimated time burden for all activities related to responding to the letter is 170 hours per unit in most cases, with the exception of up to 250 hours per unit where more than one neutron absorber is credited. For some responses the estimate is reasonably close to what we expect; however, in some cases the estimate needs to be at least two to three times higher than what is currently reflected in the Generic Letter.

For units where no neutron absorbers are credited in the nuclear criticality safety (NCS) analysis of record (AOR), the estimate of 170 hours per unit is reasonable, since the research and response development time will be minimal, and the majority of resource time spent to respond will involve internal administrative processes to draft and review the official response letter.

Duke Energy has three sites that fall into this group, also referred to as "Category 1" on page 7 of the draft Generic Letter.

For units where at least one neutron absorber is credited in the NCS AOR, which is true for the remaining four Duke Energy sites, significant time and effort will be spent researching the data requested in the various sections of Appendix A of the Generic Letter. For two Duke Energy sites, multiple absorbers are credited. For these sites in particular, the 250 hour estimate is severely under-estimated. Duke Energy estimates hundreds of hours will be spent simply researching the information needed to draft a response for each of these sites. Additionally, since these sites are more complicated to address, the necessary review time also will be longer. All phases of the response, including data gathering/research, document drafting, verification and review will require personnel from areas of nuclear fuels, reactor engineering, and regulatory affairs.

In some cases, Duke Energy may be unable to respond to a particular item of requested data for a given site due simply to lacking the subject information. These cases will require additional time, since we will need to prove to ourselves that we in fact do not have the information and/or cannot retrieve it in order to submit responses in accordance with 10 CFR 50.54(f).

Based on the previous statements, we estimate the total response time for several Duke Energy sites to be on the order of 500 to 1000 hours.

3) Is there a way to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information collected?

Duke Energy concurs with the comments NEI provided on the draft Generic Letter in May, 2014 (ML14134A010). We also agree the NRC response to public comments received (ML14181B130) indicated that many comments were not incorporated into the Generic Letter. More fully incorporating the comments from NEI would help enhance the clarity and quality of responses to the Generic Letter. Furthermore, Duke Energy concurs with NEI's comment that a public meeting between industry and NRC might assist us in understanding specific requirements and expectations of the level of detail of information requested in the Generic Letter.

4) How can the burden of the information collection on respondents be minimized, including the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology?

The Generic Letter requests data for neutron absorbers that should be common to multiple sites or licensees. This data could be sought from neutron absorber vendors, which would help eliminate duplicative effort by multiple licensees.