The Light company
Houston Lighting & Power South Texas Project Electric Generating Station P. O. Box 289 Wadsworth, Texas 77483

April 23, 1992

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U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Attention: Document Control Desk
Washington, DC 20555

South Texas Project
Units 1 and 2
Docket Nos. STN 50-498, STN 50-499
Revision of Commitment Regarding Use of Backing Rings

Reference: Correspondence from G. W. Oprea, Jr. (HL&P) to J. T. Collins (NRC) dated December 9, 1982 (ST-HL-AE-918)

By correspondence referenced above, Houston Lighting & Power Company (HL&P) committed to revise welding procedures to be used for welds on the Essential Cooling Water (ECW) System. Based on recent operating experience at the South Texas Project (STP), HL&P has determined that revision of these commitments for new welds is necessary.

The previous commitments were as follows:

1. Bechtel and Ebasco procedures now require a backing ring configuration which improves root weldability and avoids root lack of fusion.

2. All welders are qualified by radiography to ASME Code, Section IX.

3. Additionally, all ECW welders are subjected to further skill demonstration tests on full-scale mock-ups in the horizontal and vertical positions. These welds are subjected to radiographic examination. Each welder's workmanship must produce x-ray quality welds prior to the performance of production welding.

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The earlier requirements for welding processes on the ECW System are being replaced as follows:

1. Use of permanent backing rings or temporary backing rings will be optional on new welds. Double welded or open butt welds may also be used. Weld joint types without backing rings have been determined to provide quality equivalent to or better than backing ring welds.

2&3) Skill demonstrations on a full-scale mock-up will not be required of welders. However, all welders will be qualified with radiographic examination. Experience gained during the construction phase and during operation indicates that the skill demonstrations, while consuming considerable material, do not enhance the performance beyond the Code performance test, provided the welder is qualified by radiography.

Welding processes for the ECW system will comply with the requirements of the ASME Code, Section III, Class 3, and ASME Code, Section IX.

If there are any questions on this matter, please contact either Mr. P. L. Walker at (512) 972-8392, or me at (512) 972-7205.

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PLW/lf

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