

50-387/388



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

February 19, 1997

Mr. Robert G. Byram  
Senior Vice President-Nuclear  
Pennsylvania Power and Light  
Company  
2 North Ninth Street  
Allentown, PA 18101

SUBJECT: NRC BULLETIN 96-03, "POTENTIAL PLUGGING ECCS SUCTION STRAINERS,"  
REQUEST FOR DEFERRAL FOR SUSQUEHANNA STEAM ELECTRIC STATION, UNITS 1  
AND 2 (TAC NOS. M96172 AND M96173)

Dear Mr. Byram:

By letter dated October 4, 1996, you submitted your response to NRC Bulletin 96-03 "Potential Plugging of Emergency Core Cooling Suction Strainers by Debris in Boiling-Water Reactors," dated May 6, 1996, for Susquehanna Steam Electric Station (SSES) Unit 2. In your response, you requested a one-cycle deferral from implementing the requested actions of the bulletin from the spring 1997 refueling outage to the spring 1999 refueling outage. We have reviewed this letter, and have concluded that a deferral of the bulletin's requested actions is acceptable for SSES Unit 2, subject to the compensatory actions and schedule discussed below.

The NRC staff has issued several other generic communications related to boiling water reactor (BWR) emergency core cooling system (ECCS) strainer blockage. Bulletin 93-02 "Debris Plugging of Emergency Core Cooling Suction Strainers," dated May 11, 1993, requested licensees to ensure that there were no sources of fibrous material in containment not capable of withstanding a loss-of-coolant accident (LOCA). You responded to Bulletin 93-02 on June 8, 1993, stating that no fibrous air filters or other temporary sources of fibrous material are currently installed in the primary containment of either SSES unit.

Bulletin 93-02, Supplement 1 "Debris Plugging of Emergency Core Cooling Suction Strainers," dated February 18, 1994, requested that licensees provide training and emergency operating procedures for plant operators and specify alternative water sources which may be used to mitigate a strainer blockage event. You responded to this bulletin on April 19, 1994, and June 17, 1994, by describing the planned resolution of the requested actions of the bulletin supplement. We acknowledged this by letter dated July 14, 1994, stating that your response adequately addressed the actions you have taken to ensure the operability of ECCS recirculation. You subsequently transmitted a letter documenting completion of operator requalification training on August 31, 1994.

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NRC Bulletin 95-02, "Unexpected Clogging of a Residual Heat Removal (RHR) Pump Strainer While Operating in Suppression Pool Cooling Mode," dated October 17, 1995, requested licensees to take actions necessary to ensure operability of the ECCS with respect to suppression pool cleanliness and foreign material

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exclusion programs. You responded to this bulletin by letter dated November 15, 1995. In this letter you stated that all the strainers in question at both units had been inspected and found to be free of fiber and that the small amount of foreign material present in the suppression pools of both reactors was removed. In addition, you committed to several actions, which were summarized in your October 4, 1996, response to Bulletin 96-03.

Your October 4, 1996, response to Bulletin 96-03 also discussed compensatory actions that have been taken at SSES and others that will be taken during the spring 1997 refueling outage of Unit 2.

We agree with your proposal to defer final resolution of Bulletin 96-03 based on your response to the previous bulletins on this subject discussed above and the actions you stated in your October 4, 1996, letter that you intend to take during the spring 1997 outage. In addition, we request that you perform the following compensatory actions.

- 1) Your October 4, 1996, response to Bulletin 96-03 stated that the suppression pool will be desludged or filtered during the Unit 2 Spring 1997 refueling outage. We request that you desludge the suppression pool in order to minimize the potential burden on the existing strainers. Staff calculations show that the speed and severity of strainer blockage is sensitive to the amount of "sludge" or rust particles in the suppression pool. Therefore, it is prudent, until larger strainers are installed, to minimize the amount of sludge in the suppression pool.
- 2) We request that you perform an inspection in the drywell to verify that the insulation is not damaged and is properly installed and that any insulation that is damaged or not properly installed is repaired or replaced.
- 3) We also request that you perform a thorough drywell and suppression pool closeout inspection to verify that all foreign material has been removed such as maintenance tools, equipment, construction materials, and miscellaneous debris. This inspection should include the downcomers.

In addition, we request that you install passive suction strainers in each unit and make them operational on or before December 31, 1998. If this is not acceptable, you should notify the staff, in writing, prior to startup from the spring 1997 refueling outage.



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We conclude that these compensatory actions will provide assurance of the continued safe operation of SSES Unit 1 until December 31, 1998, with the existing strainers when combined with your commitments to Bulletins 93-02; 93-02, Supplement 1; and 95-02.

Sincerely,

/S/

Chester Poslusny, Senior Project Manager  
Project Directorate I-2  
Division of Reactor Projects - I/II  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket Nos. 50-387/388

cc: See next page

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Sincerely,



Chester Poslusny, Senior Project Manager  
Project Directorate I-2  
Division of Reactor Projects - I/II  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket Nos. 50-387/388

cc: See next page

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