

FEB 15 1974

Docket No. 50-249

Commonwealth Edison Company
ATTN: Mr. J. S. Abel
Nuclear Licensing Administrator -
Boiling Water Reactors
Post Office Box 767
Chicago, Illinois 60690

Gentlemen:

In your letter of November 5, 1973, you presented your evaluation and conclusions with regard to potential hairline cracks in the bosses of up to 27 lower tie plates of Dresden 3 fuel bundles. These tie plates are suspected to be part of a manufacturer's lot in which casting defects were identified. The bundles are part of the 52 assembly Reload 1 installed during the spring 1973 refueling outage.

We have reviewed the General Electric report referenced in your letter in regard to the potential for crack propagation and dislodging of a section of a tie plate. We have concluded that the GE report presents a reasonable assessment of the likelihood of failure of the defective lower tie plates. In the unlikely event that cracks did propagate, it is our judgment that they would not propagate across the webbing but in a peripheral direction so that a section of the tie plate would not become dislodged to present a safety hazard.

Nevertheless, it is our opinion that a visual inspection should be performed on a sampling of the Reload 1 assemblies during the upcoming refueling outage to verify the integrity of the tie plates. Since the hairline cracks in other castings in the suspect lot were found only in the peripheral bosses, we would consider a visual inspection of the periphery of the assemblies with the channel boxes removed to be acceptable. We request that the visual inspections be performed on a minimum of sixteen Reload 1 assemblies. If gross cracking is observed on the tie plate of one assembly, the remainder of the Reload 1 assemblies shall be inspected. Any assembly that exhibits gross cracking shall not be returned to the core.

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We also request that you submit for information a report of the results and evaluation of your inspections prior to the end of your refueling outage. The report should be submitted with one signed original and thirty-nine additional copies.

Sincerely,

Original Signed by:
Donald J. Skovholt

Donald J. Skovholt
Assistant Director
for Operating Reactors
Directorate of Licensing

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