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SUBJECT: Requests permanent relief from inservice insp requirements of 10CFR50.55a(g) for volumetric exam of BFN, Unit 3 circumferential RPV welds.

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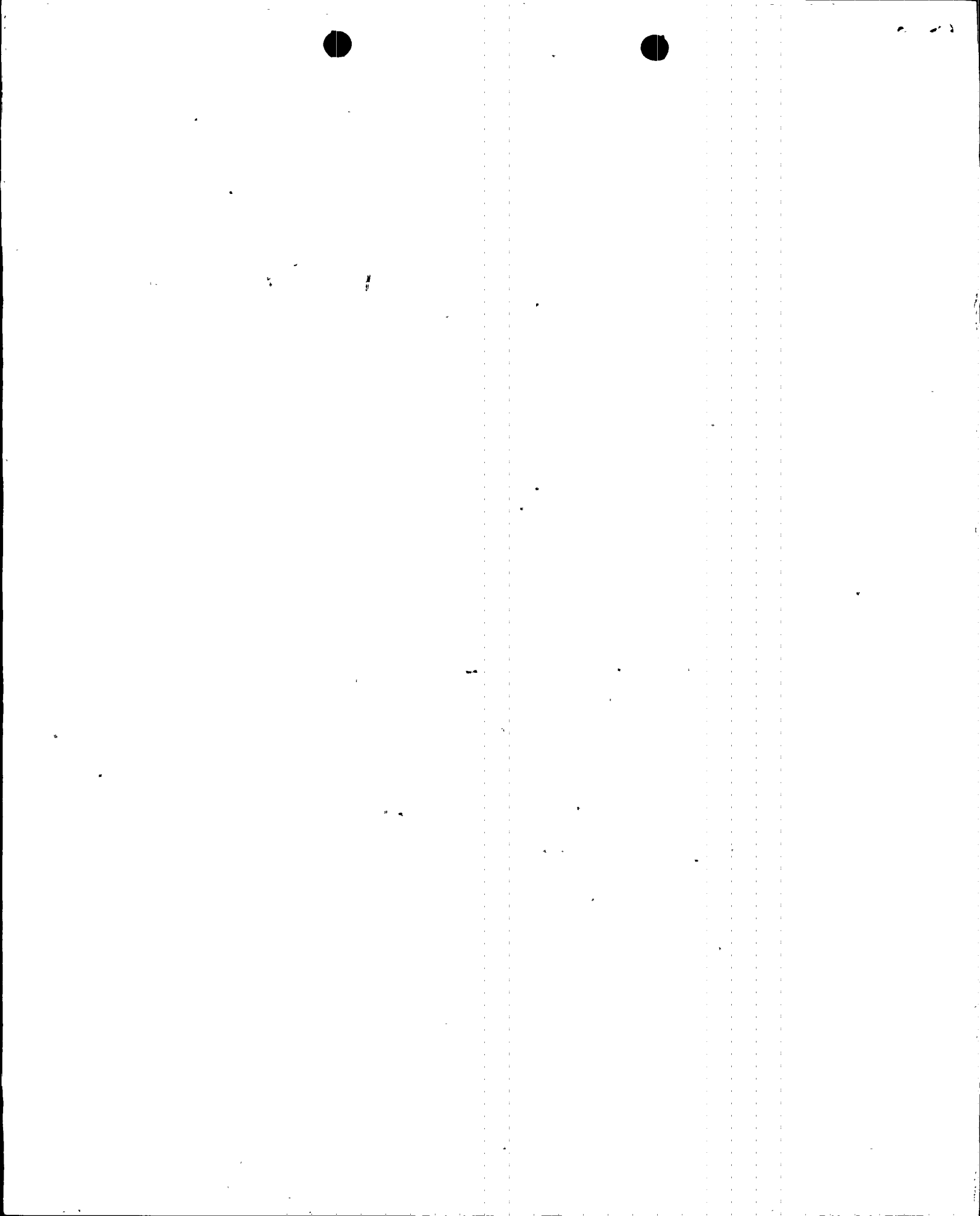
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Tennessee Valley Authority, Post Office Box 2000, Decatur, Alabama 35609-2000

June 25, 1999

10 CFR 50.55a(a)(3)(i)

U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
ATTN: Document Control Desk  
Washington, D.C. 20555

Gentlemen:

In the Matter of ) Docket No. 50-296  
Tennessee Valley Authority )

BROWNS FERRY NUCLEAR PLANT (BFN) - UNIT 3 - REQUEST FOR RELIEF, 3-ISI-1, REVISION 1, REGARDING REACTOR PRESSURE VESSEL (RPV) SHELL WELDS, AUGMENTED AND AMERICAN SOCIETY OF MECHANICAL ENGINEERS (ASME) SECTION XI INSPECTIONS

In accordance with 10 CFR 50.55a(a)(3)(i), TVA is requesting permanent relief (i.e., for the remaining term of operation under the existing license) from inservice inspection requirements of 10 CFR 50.55a(g) for the volumetric examination of the BFN Unit 3 circumferential reactor pressure vessel welds. The proposed alternative in TVA's request for relief provides an acceptable level of quality and safety and is consistent with the guidance and criteria described in NRC Generic Letter (GL) 98-05, "Boiling Water Reactor Licensees Use of the BWRVIP-05 Report to Request Relief from Augmented Examination Requirements on Reactor Pressure Vessel Circumferential Shell Welds."

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TVA has previously requested relief, for one operating cycle (Cycle 8), from performing successive examinations of the Unit 3 reactor pressure vessel (RPV) circumferential shell

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weld flaws and was granted relief by the NRC in a letter dated August 17, 1998. Subsequent to NRC's approval of TVA's request for relief, the staff completed its review of the BWRVIP-05 Report and issued its final Safety Evaluation Report (SER). This SER authorizes permanent relief from inservice inspection requirements for circumferential BWR reactor pressure vessel welds. The staff's SER also accepted the BWRVIP-05 Report recommendation to eliminate successive examinations for "non threatening" flaws (e.g., such as embedded flaws from material manufacturing or vessel fabrication which experience negligible or no growth during the life of the vessel) provided certain conditions are met. In the enclosed request for relief (3-ISI-1, Revision 1), TVA provides assurance it has met the required conditions to eliminate successive examinations for the previously identified 15 circumferential weld flaws in the BFN Unit 3 RPV.

NRC issued GL 98-05 on November 10, 1998, which stated that licensees of BWRs may request permanent relief from the inservice inspection requirements of 10 CFR 50.55a(g) for the volumetric examination of circumferential reactor pressure welds by demonstrating that: (1) at the expiration of the operating license, the circumferential welds will continue to satisfy the limiting conditional failure probability for circumferential welds in the staff's BWRVIP-05 Report SER dated July 28, 1998, and (2) licensee has implemented operator training and established procedures that limit the frequency of cold over-pressure events to the amount specified in the staff's July 30, 1998 SER. The enclosed request for relief demonstrates that TVA meets the guidance in GL 98-05 for permanent relief from the inservice inspection requirements of 10 CFR 50.55a(g) for the volumetric examination of the BFN Unit 3 RPV circumferential welds.

TVA requests approval of this relief request by December 31, 1999. This is to allow for resource planning for the Unit 3 Cycle 9 (Spring 2000) refueling outage to support scheduled ASME Section XI outage activities.



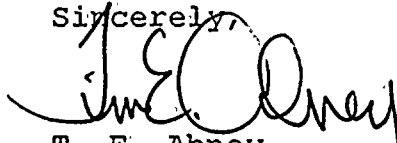
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There are no new commitments contained in this letter. If you have any questions, please telephone me at (256) 729-2636.

Sincerely,



T. E. Abney  
Manager of Licensing  
and Industry Affairs

Enclosure

cc: (Enclosure):

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