



UNITED STATES  
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

January 28, 1999

Docket File

50-235

Mr. Nathan L. Haskell  
Director, Licensing  
Palisades Plant  
27780 Blue Star Memorial Highway  
Covert, MI 49043

SUBJECT: PALISADES PLANT - EVALUATION OF INSERVICE INSPECTION PROGRAM  
RELIEF REQUEST NO. RR-13 (TAC NO. MA4420)

Dear Mr. Haskell:

By letter dated December 20, 1998, you submitted a request for the staff to authorize Consumers Energy's proposed alternative to the requirements of ASME Section XI Article IWA-5250 for degraded P-50A primary coolant pump casing bolts at the Palisades Plant. You transmitted supplementary information by fax on December 21, 1998, in response to staff questions provided in several teleconferences with your staff. This supplementary information was subsequently docketed by your letter dated December 22, 1998. Your December 22, 1998, letter also stated that the supplemental information would be incorporated into a revision of engineering analysis EA-C-PAL-1939-01 that would be submitted to the NRC. The revised analysis was submitted by your letter dated January 14, 1999.

Your letters provided commitments to (1) visually inspect the pump flange area at each forced shutdown prior to the 1999 refueling outage which requires the primary coolant system (PCS) to be in Hot Shutdown conditions or below, (2) perform ultrasonic inspection of the degraded bolts at each forced shutdown requiring the PCS to be placed in Cold Shutdown, (3) administratively limit PCS unidentified leakage to 0.5 gpm versus the 1.0 gpm allowance provided by the Technical Specifications and, (4) perform a confirmatory leak rate determination if the leak rate calculation indicates an unidentified leak rate in excess of 0.3 gpm or if the sump inleakage rate increases by 0.2 gpm in any 24-hour period. If the confirmatory calculation verifies that the unidentified leak rate is greater than 0.3 gpm and the reason for the leak rate is not understood, action will be initiated within 24 hours to place the plant in Hot Standby and it will be verified that the indication of leakage was not a result of significant additional degradation of P-50A before the plant is returned to power operation. You also committed to replace the bolting when data indicates that degradation will exceed the limits established by analysis, and to replace the degraded bolting no later than the next refueling outage scheduled to begin in October 1999.

The staff has reviewed the information contained in your request and has concluded that your proposed alternative to defer the replacement of the bolts until the 1999 refueling outage is acceptable since compliance with the specified requirements of 10 CFR 50.55a would result in hardship or unusual difficulty without a compensating increase in the level of quality and safety and the proposed alternative provides reasonable assurance of operational readiness. Therefore, the proposed alternative is authorized pursuant to 10 CFR 50.55a(a)(3)(ii). The staff's approval of the proposed alternative was communicated to you by teleconference on December 21, 1998.

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Mr. N. L. Haskell

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January 28, 1999

A copy of our related safety evaluation is enclosed. If you have any questions concerning this action please contact Robert G. Schaaf of my staff at (301) 415-1312.

Sincerely,

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY

Cynthia A. Carpenter, Director  
Project Directorate III-1  
Division of Reactor Projects - III/IV  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket No. 50-255

Enclosure: Safety Evaluation

cc w/encl: See next page

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Consumers Energy Company

Palisades Plant

cc:

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