

FEBRUARY 25 1980

Docket No. 50-272

Mr. F. P. Librizzi, General Manager
Electric Production
Public Service Electric & Gas Company
80 Park Place, Room 7221
Newark, New Jersey 07101

Dear Mr. Librizzi:

During the last several years, data have begun to indicate that the fission gas release rate from LWR fuel pellets is increased (enhanced) with burnup. Many of the current fuel performance analyses do not consider the impact of burnup-enhanced release on safety. By letters dated November 23, 1976, the NRC staff requested all LWR licensees to assess the higher fission gas release for fuel burnups above 20,000 Megawatt-day per metric ton (MWD/t).

Also, by NRC staff letter dated January 18, 1978, all U. S. LWR fuel suppliers were requested to revise their fuel performance analyses to include the enhancement of fission gas release at higher burnups.

All responses to the November 23, 1976 letters have been reviewed. We have concluded that no immediate licensing action is required for operating reactors. This conclusion is valid for typical reported LWR fuel bundle and batch burnups. Any extension of these burnups or other factors which significantly affect fission gas release, LOCA PCT or fuel rod internal pressure is outside the scope of the conclusion.

Westinghouse was the only fuel supplier calculating that the increased release would cause internal fuel rod pressure to exceed coolant system pressure. The staff has approved revised design criteria which allow internal rod pressures greater than system pressure. The staff is also completing the review of a Westinghouse revised fuel performance code. The staff, in evaluating reloads, has been requesting licensees using Westinghouse fuel to quantify the burnup when the newly approved design criteria will be violated. In the reloads evaluated thus far, there appears to be a significant burnup margin to the newly approved evaluated design criteria to compensate for modifications which may result from the staff's review of the Westinghouse revised fuel performance code.

Inasmuch as you and/or the staff will be evaluating all future reloads against fuel vendors' revised fuel performance codes which provide for increase in fission gas release at higher burnups, we consider this a satisfactory resolution of this concern.

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| OFFICE > | DOR:ORB# | Sincerely, | |
| BURNNAME > | ASchwencer:pat | Original Signed By | |
| DATE > | 2/25/80 | | |



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

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Sincerely,

A. Schwencer, Chief
Operating Reactors Branch #1
Division of Operating Reactors

cc: See next page

Mr. F. P. Librizzi
Public Service Electric and Gas Company

FEBRUARY 25 1960

cc: Mark J. Wetterhahn, Esquire
Conner, Moore and Corber
Suite 1050
1747 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D. C. 20006

Richard Fryling, Jr., Esquire
Assistant General Solicitor
Public Service Electric and Gas Company
80 Park Place
Newark, New Jersey 07101

Gene Fisher, Bureau of Chief
Bureau of Radiation Protection
380 Scotch Road
Trenton, New Jersey 08628

Mr. Hank Midura, Manager
Salem Nuclear Generating Station
Public Service Electric and Gas Company
80 Park Place
Newark, New Jersey 07101

Mr. R. L. Mittl, General Manager
Licensing and Environment
Public Service Electric and Gas Company
80 Park Place
Newark, New Jersey 07101

Salem Free Library
112 West Broadway
Salem, New Jersey 08079

Leif J. Norrholm
U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Drawer I
Hancocks Bridge, New Jersey 08038