

Paulis
B&W

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE

PN0-V: 80-17

Date: March 11, 1980

This preliminary notification constitutes EARLY notice of events of POSSIBLE safety or public interest significance. The information presented is as initially received without verification or evaluation and is basically all that is known by IE staff on this date.

Facility: Sacramento Municipal Utility District
Rancho Seco Nuclear Power Plant
Sacramento, California
Docket No. 50-312

Subject: DAMAGE TO FUEL ASSEMBLY SPACER GRIDS AT RANCHO SECO

The Senior Resident Inspector was informed that spacer grids on five Cycle 3 fuel assemblies (FAs) were damaged during recent fuel movements performed as part of the Cycle 4 refueling outage. Video tapes and polaroid pictures of the damaged FAs indicated approximately 6.4 square inches of material was missing from the spacer grids and involving 14 separate pieces. Vacuuming of the lower and upper core areas has recovered about one-half of the material. The remaining material has not been located. The cause of the damage was attributed to contact between the spacer grids on assemblies with "bowed" fuel and the spacer grids on adjacent assemblies during refueling operations. The licensee stated that fuel "bowing" has been experienced at Rancho Seco in the past. In all cases B&W was made aware of the problem by SMUD. The five damaged assemblies have been returned to the core after analyses by the vendor (B&W) and the licensee's review committees.

Region V informed IE:HQs and NRR of the above problem, via telephone, on March 10, 1980. NRR has subsequently been in direct contact with licensee personnel and are currently evaluating the significance of the problem.

The Rancho Seco facility is currently in a cold shutdown condition for refueling operations which were initiated on January 12, 1980. A return to power operation is scheduled to commence on March 21, 1980.

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Preliminary Notification (Continued)

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Region V was provided the above information by the Resident Inspector on March 10, 1980. This information is current as of 11:00 AM PST on March 11, 1980.

Media interest is not anticipated. A press release is not planned by the NRC at this time. It is not known at this time if the licensee intends to issue a press release.