

October 13, 1981

Peter B. Bloch, Chairman
Administrative Judge
Atomic Safety and Licensing Board
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D.C. 20555

Dr. Hugh C. Paxton
Administrative Judge
1229 - 41st Street
Los Alamos, New Mexico 87544

Dr. Jerry R. Kline
Administrative Judge
Atomic Safety and Licensing Board
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D.C. 20555



In the Matter of
WISCONSIN ELECTRIC POWER COMPANY
(Point Beach Nuclear Plant, Units 1 & 2)
Docket Nos. 50-266 and 50-301
(Repair to Steam Generator Tubes)

Dear Administrative Judges:

During the October 9, 1981 on-the-record telephone conference, the Chairman of the Licensing Board requested Staff Counsel to advise the Licensing Board whether the Staff intended to review and act upon the proposed demonstration program which was the subject of Wisconsin Electric Power Company's (WE or Licensee) Motion for Authorization of Interim Operation of Unit 1 with Steam Generator Tubes Sleeved Rather than Plugged, dated September 28, 1981. Tr. at 106. I have consulted with the technical staff and can advise the Licensing Board that the Staff will review and act upon the proposed demonstration program. For the purpose of developing a full record on this matter, it is appropriate to indicate the Staff's concern with the procedures originally recommended by the Licensee and the currently estimated schedule of the Staff's review of the proposed demonstration program.

WE's license currently requires it to plug tubes in its steam generator when the walls of the tubes have been degraded by more than 40 percent of the nominal tube wall thickness. Technical Specification 15.4.2.A.5(a) Plugging Limit. On July 2, 1981, WE filed an application to amend its operating licenses for the Point Beach Nuclear Plant Units 1 and 2 to provide that the corrective measures for degraded tubes could be either plugging the tubes or repairing them by a process such as sleeving. As noted by Counsel for the Licensee during the September 16, 1981 on-the-record telephone conference, careful examination of the requested amendment discloses that approval of the amendment would result in a change to the technical specification for the two units at the Point Beach Nuclear Plant so that the licensee could sleeve (rather than plug) as many degraded tubes as necessary for both units. Tr. at 9-10. The proposed technical specification contains no limitation of initially

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sleeving six degraded tubes at Unit 1 in the nature of a demonstration program. Id. For the Staff to have imposed such a limitation upon approval of the proposed technical specification would have been a modification of the license requiring that the provisions of 10 C.F.R. § 2.204 be complied with. However, now that the licensee has modified its request for a technical specification change to provide for the demonstration program (See attached letter to Harold R. Denton from Sol Burstein dated October 12, 1981), this Staff concern has been removed.

The Licensee has indicated that it desires to conduct the sleeving demonstration program at Point Beach Unit 1 during the fall of 1981 refueling outage scheduled for the period October 9 through November 11, 1981. As Staff Counsel indicated during the October 9, 1981 telephone conference, the Staff's review of the proposed demonstration program will involve the efforts of six separate staff technical review branches. Tr. at 102. The priorities and resources of these technical review branches have been changed to accommodate the tight schedule in this matter. The Staff will make its best efforts to complete its review within 15 calendar days from today (or by October 28, 1981) including the issuance of its safety evaluation report and any appropriate environmental determination.

Sincerely,

Stuart A. Treby
Assistant Chief Hearing Counsel
Counsel for the Staff

Enclosure:
As stated above

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