

The Light company

Houston Lighting & Power P.O. Box 1700 Houston, Texas 77001 (713) 228-9211

November 25, 1981

ST-HL-AE-759

SFN: V-0530

Mr. John T. Collins,
Regional Administrator, Region IV
Nuclear Regulatory Commission
611 Ryan Plaza Dr., Suite 1000
Arlington, TX 76012

Dear Mr. Collins:

South Texas Project
Units 1 & 2
Docket Nos. STN 50-498, STN 50-499
First Interim Report Concerning
Rockbestos Company Coaxial Cable



On October 26, 1981, pursuant to 10CFR50.55(e) Houston Lighting & Power Company notified your office of an item concerning cable manufactured by Rockbestos Company used in electrical penetrations supplied by Westinghouse. HL&P was advised by letter from Westinghouse that Rockbestos had identified to them a potential for failure of certain coaxial cables. In particular Rockbestos had stated to Westinghouse:

"After extensive examination and testing, we have confirmed that under some conditions, and to a degree not completely predictable, Rockbestos solid dielectric coaxial constructions may exhibit failures due to shorting of the center conductor to the braided shield.

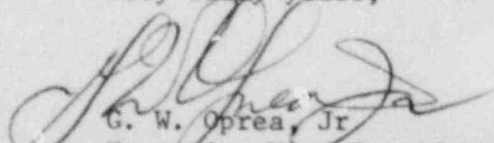
Expansion of the dielectric when heated causes foreshortening of the braid shield, which in turn results in longitudinal compression and kinking of the center conductor. This kinking, combined with heat may cause mechanical and/or thermal stress cracking of the polymer LD inner layer, permitting electrical failure.

RSS-6-100 through RSS-6-112 constructions may be subject to failures of this type at temperatures above 230°F."

It is our understanding that a test program to determine the appropriate corrective measures is underway at Rockbestos. Our next report on this item will be submitted by April 30, 1982.

If you should have any questions concerning this item, please contact Mr. Michael E. Powell at (713) 676-8592.

Very truly yours,


G. W. Oprea, Jr.
Executive Vice President

MEP/blt

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Page 3

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