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NOTE TO: L. L. Kintner

FROM: Robert L. Baer

SUBJECT: "ADD ON" GENERIC ISSUE - UNDERCLAD CRACKS

A memorandum (Attachment 1) that you referenced in a note to me requested information from a number of license applicants concerning the cracking found in Westinghouse reactor vessel nozzles. In your note you requested SPEB to determine if this cracking phenomenon was an "add on" candidate for the Generic Issues Program.

While the cracks that have been found are numerous, their size, location and potential growth rate during service do not indicate any safety concern (see the staff evaluations in Attachments 2 and 3). In fact, the cracks that have been found, if compared to the requirements of Section XI of the ASME Code, are both smaller than the maximum size allowed and can only be detected reliably using equipment more sensitive than required. Compliance with Section XI is recognized by the staff as providing adequate assurance that the reactor vessel has sufficient margin against flaw induced failure. However, to gain a better understanding of the cause of the flaws and to ensure the required margin of safety, the staff is requesting additional information from several plants prior to issuance of their OL (see Attachment 1) and requiring that the reactor vessel nozzles on Sequoyah 1 and North Anna 2 receive a periodic augmented inservice inspection.

Based upon the staff's conclusions regarding the safety aspects of this cracking phenomenon (detailed in Attachments 2 and 3) and compliance with Section XI of the ASME Code, we do not recommend that this problem be included on the generic issues list. For further guidance in handling other issues of this nature, I am enclosing a recent memorandum (Attachment 4) that details our recommendations regarding requests for information and identification of Generic Safety Issues.

Original Signed By

Robert L. Baer

Attachments:
As Stated

ccs w/attachments:
M. Ernst
R. Baer
M. Boyle

PDR XA

8010210037

All

DST:SPEB

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