



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

November 23, 1990

Docket No. 50-458

Gulf States Utilities
ATTN: Mr. James C. Deddens
Senior Vice President (RBNG)
Post Office Box 220
St. Francisville, Louisiana 70775

Dear Mr. Deddens:

SUBJECT: INDICATION IN THE INLET FEEDWATER NOZZLE (N4A-2) TO SAFE-END WELD -
RIVER BEND STATION, UNIT 1 (TAC NO. 79072)

In May 1989, Gulf States Utilities Company (GSU) identified a circumferential indication in the buttered area of the N4A-2 inlet feedwater nozzle to safe-end weld. The indication was detected and sized by manual examination and was approximately 6.125 inches long with a maximum depth of 0.2 inches and an average depth of 0.15 inches. In accordance with Generic Letter (GL) 88-01, a flaw evaluation was performed by GSU. GSU determined operation with the indication through Cycle 3 was acceptable provided a mid-cycle inspection and evaluation indicated structural integrity was being maintained. The mid-cycle examination, consisting of manual and automatic (P-Scan), revealed no increase in depth, but the length had increased 0.5 inches to a total length of 6.625 inches. The NRC staff reviewed these examinations and evaluations and found them to be acceptable.

During the current refueling outage (RF3), GSU was required to perform another inspection of the indication per GL 88-01. By letter dated November 19, 1990, GSU submitted the results of the ultrasonic inspections and the General Electric crack growth assessment and fracture mechanics analysis. Based on the manual and P-Scan examinations, GSU concluded that the indication has grown to a maximum length of 7.7 inches and a maximum depth of 0.33 inches.

The NRC staff has reviewed the November 19, 1990, submittal and concluded that there is reasonable assurance that structural integrity of the nozzle to safe-end weld will be maintained and River Bend Station may continue operation to mid-cycle, which is scheduled for late September 1991. Furthermore, GSU has committed to re-examine and evaluate the nozzle to safe-end weld during the mid-cycle outage and during refueling outage 4 (RF4) and to join the EPRI Nozzle/Safe-End Research Program. The results of the mid-cycle examination and evaluation are to be submitted to the NRC for review and approval prior to resumption of reactor operation.

The Safety Evaluation which provides the basis for the above conclusion will be transmitted to you at a later date. The reporting requirements contained

in this letter affect fewer than ten respondents; therefore, OMB clearance is not required under P.L. 96-511.

Sincerely,

Original Signed By:

Claudia M. Abbate, Project Manager
Project Directorate IV-2
Division of Reactor Projects III/IV/V
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

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Mr. James C. Deddens

- 3 -

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