

February 22, 1991

Docket No. 50-458

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

Dear Mr. Deddens:

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

By letter dated November 19, 1990, Gulf States Utilities Company (GSU) submitted the results of the ultrasonic testing (UT) performed on the N4A-2 feedwater nozzle to safe-end weld during the third refueling outage at the River Bend Station (RBS) and requested NRC approval of operation of RBS through Cycle 4 with the unrepaired weld indication. The letter also included the General Electric (GE) crack growth assessment and fracture mechanics analysis. The results of the UT concluded the indication had increased in size since the inspection performed in March 1990 and is currently 7.7 inches long (20 percent pipe circumference) and has a maximum depth of 0.33 inches (30 percent through-wall).

GSU and GE concluded that operation of RBS until the Cycle 4 mid-cycle outage, scheduled for September 1991, is acceptable without taking any corrective actions at this time. In a letter dated November 23, 1990, the NRC staff concluded there is reasonable assurance that structural integrity of the nozzle to safe-end weld will be maintained, that RBS may continue operation to mid-cycle, and the Safety Evaluation (SE) would be transmitted at a later date. This letter transmits the SE, which provides the basis for the staff's conclusion. During the mid-cycle outage, GSU will re-examine and evaluate the indication to ensure there is no excessive crack growth. The results of the mid-cycle inspection are to be submitted to the NRC for review and approval prior to resumption of reactor operation.

The reporting requirements contained in this letter affect fewer than ten respondents; therefore, OMB clearance is not required under Public Law 96-511.

Sincerely,

(ORIGINAL SIGNED BY)

Claudia M. Abbate, Project Manager
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Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

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P PDR

Enclosure:
Safety Evaluation

cc w/enclosure:
See next page

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Mr. James C. Deddens

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February 22, 1991

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