



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

October 20, 1995

MEMORANDUM TO: Chairman Jackson
Commissioner Rogers

FROM: James M. Taylor *[Signature]*
Executive Director for Operations

SUBJECT: STATUS OF STAFF'S ASSESSMENT OF SIMPLIFIED BOILING WATER
REACTOR TEST PROGRAM

The purpose of this memorandum is to submit background material and a discussion of the schedule for informing the Commission of the staff's evaluation of the simplified boiling water reactor (SBWR) test program.

On March 7, 1994, the staff identified a number of concerns regarding the SBWR test program. In response to these concerns, General Electric (GE) reassessed the program by performing both an internal GE review and an external independent review. This reassessment was documented in NEDC-32391P, "SBWR Test and Analysis Program Description (TAPD)." GE submitted the TAPD for review on August 10, 1994, with a request that the staff evaluate the acceptability of the program described therein. As a result of its review, the staff determined that additional support information and more testing and analysis were required in the TAPD before it could come to a final conclusion regarding the adequacy of GE's test program to support design certification of the SBWR.

In a memorandum to the Commission dated June 21, 1994, the staff committed to brief the Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards (ACRS) on its evaluation of GE's reassessment and its recommendations regarding GE's test program, and prepare a Commission paper addressing the test issues.

On November 25, 1994, the staff transmitted a draft evaluation report on the SBWR TAPD to the ACRS for their review and also requested a letter from the ACRS addressing the adequacy of the technical approach described in the TAPD.

The staff met with the ACRS Thermal-Hydraulic Phenomena Subcommittee and the full committee on January 10 and 12, 1995, respectively. In these meetings, the ACRS raised concerns similar to those identified by the staff in its draft evaluation report and made two additional significant comments involving scaling methodology and noncondensable gas distributions in the containment.

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To address the significant programmatic and technical deficiencies identified by the staff and the ACRS, GE supplemented its TAPD in April 1995, (Revision B) and again at the end of August 1995 (Revision C). As a result of these revisions, a major portion of the TAPD (scaling) has been separated as a stand-alone report and is expected to be submitted in October 1995. Also, GE did not respond to a number of requests for additional information (RAIs) that the staff expected to see addressed in the most recent revision to the TAPD, nor did it give a schedule for their submittal. In addition, the staff expects to identify a number of open items concerning Revision C to the TAPD, which will require resolution before the staff can issue its evaluation of the SBWR test program. Therefore, the staff does not yet have sufficient information in the TAPD and supporting documents to permit it to prepare that evaluation.

If the scaling report and responses to outstanding RAIs are submitted by mid-October 1995, and if these responses and TAPD adequately address the staff and ACRS concerns, then, the staff could issue its evaluation of the SBWR test program in the spring of 1996. That evaluation will serve as the basis for a Commission paper, as committed to in the staff's June 21, 1994, memorandum to the Commission.

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DOCUMENT NAME: A: SBWRSECY.TAP

See previous concurrence*

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The Commissioners

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To address the significant programmatic and technical deficiencies identified by the staff and the ACRS, GE supplemented its TAPD in April 1995, (Revision B) and again at the end of August 1995 (Revision C). Contrary to the staff's expectation, a major portion of the TAPD (scaling) has been separated as a stand-alone report and is expected to be submitted in October 1995. Also, GE did not include in the TAPD responses to a number of requests for additional information (RAIs) that the staff expected to see addressed in the most recent revision to the TAPD, nor did it give a schedule for their submittal. In addition, the staff expects to identify a number of open items concerning Revision C to the TAPD, which will require resolution before the staff can issue its evaluation of the SBWR test program. Therefore, the staff does not yet have sufficient information in the TAPD and supporting documents to permit it to prepare that evaluation.

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