



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

March 1, 1996

Mr. Paul Gunter, Director
Reactor Watchdog Project
Nuclear Information and Resource Service
1424 16th Street, N.W., Suite 404
Washington, DC 20036

Mr. Shean H. BJORALT, Director
Communications and Logistics
Prairie Island Coalition
212 N. 3rd Avenue, #350
Minneapolis, MN 55401

Dear Messrs. Gunter and BJORALT:

This letter acknowledges receipt of an addendum dated February 19, 1996, to your Petition of June 5, 1995, in which you raised further concerns regarding intergranular stress-corrosion cracking (IGSCC) of steam generator tubes at Northern States Power Company's Prairie Island Nuclear Generating Plant, Units 1 and 2.

In the addendum of February 19, 1996, you quoted a statement I made in a briefing to the Commission on January 31, 1996, in which I discussed experience from 1995 reactor refueling outages with respect to steam generator inspections. I had stated that there were a few isolated cases of free span cracking in steam generator tubes, that is, cracks not located within the tube support plate or the tube sheet regions. In your addendum, you requested that Prairie Island Unit 1 not be allowed to return to operation until a full-length inspection of all steam generator tubes is conducted using the state-of-the-art Zetec Plus Point probe, based on the information made available at the Commission briefing on January 31, 1996.

Your addendum provided no new information to the staff. The instances of free span cracking that I referred to were axially oriented. Inspections with the bobbin coil probe alerted the affected licensees to the presence of free span axial indications. The bobbin coil probe is an appropriate probe for performing the general-purpose, full-length inspection of the tubing because of its capability to detect flaw geometries exhibiting an axial component. Northern States Power Company has conducted full-length inspections using the bobbin coil probe of all steam generator tubes that have not been plugged during the current outage on Unit 1, except for the U-bends of row 1 and row 2 tubes where the bobbin coil probe cannot travel. All row 1 and row 2 tubes were inspected in the U-bends with rotating coil probes, including the Zetec Plus Point probe. These inspections were adequate to identify axial indications.

The NRC staff's review of the information provided in the addendum to your Petition has not identified any safety issues warranting immediate action at the Prairie Island Nuclear Generating Plant. Consequently, your request to

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not allow Prairie Island Unit 1 to be returned to operation until a full-length inspection of all steam generator tubes is conducted using the Plus Point probe is denied.

As provided by 10 CFR 2.206, the NRC will take appropriate action on your Petition within a reasonable time. I have enclosed for your information a copy of the notice that is being filed with the Office of the Federal Register for publication.

Sincerely,

Original Signed By

William T. Russell, Director
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket Nos. 50-282/50-306

Enclosure: FR Notice

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* See previous concurrence OFFICIAL RECORD COPY

* telecon w/Adensam

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March 1995

DISTRIBUTION: 2.206 Acknowledgement to Gunter and Bjoralt Petition
Addendum of 2/19/96
Dated: March 1, 1996

Docket File (w/incoming)(50-282/50-306)
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