

From: PAUL BLANCH <PMBLANCH@ix.netcom.com>
To: WND2.WNP3(jaz)
Date: 3/29/97 4:56am
Subject: SEQUOYAH 1 RCS PARTIAL DRAIN DOWN

3/29/97

John A. Zwolinski, Deputy Director Division of Reactor Projects -I/II Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation
Washington DC 20555-0001

John:

I received the following last week.

SEQUOYAH 1 RCS PARTIAL DRAIN DOWN. On 3/23/97, in preparation for = reactor vessel disassembly, operators started to reduce the RCS = inventory from 56 % to 25 % Pressurizer level by procedure using the = cold calibrated instrument. After a half hour, operators noticed the = cold calibrated Pressurizer level indication had stopped decreasing = and was steady at about 34 %. The hot calibrated Pressurizer level = indications were 0 %, but were not required to be monitored by = procedure. The operators observed Reactor Vessel Level Indication at = 92 %, and stopped the drain evolution upon realizing the level = discrepancy and initiated filling. It was determined the RCS level = had drained to approximately 3 feet above the top of the Reactor =

Vessel flange. This represents about 4000 gallons drained below the = intended amount. Shutdown cooling was not affected during the event. =

The licensee identified the reference leg for cold calibrated = Pressurizer level instrument was not filled and is investigating the = root cause. [NRC Headquarters Report]

This appears to be the same problem I identified in 1989 at Millstone = Unit 3. Westinghouse also identified this problem in February of = 1988. Bill Russell determined this not to be a problem in 1992. This = appears to be related to inoperable cold condensate pots. The full = Commission refused to require any plants to conduct an operability = determination.

I suspect that the licensee and the NRC will find that the condensate = pot was cold and no make-up was being supplied to keep the reference = leg full. As a result of minor leakage, the reference leg slowly lost = level. This was not detected as the cold calibrated pressurizer level = is not used during normal operation. This is the same problem = identified on Millstone Unit 3 when 2 out of 3 reference legs lost = level.

At one time OIG was investigating this as it related to the BWR=B9s = but we mutually agreed to cease the effort because the outcome was = likely to be similar to the Rosemount investigation. I was given = assurance by the NRC Staff that this issue was properly closed out = for both BWR=B9s and PWR=B9s.

If you need any help in identifying the root cause of this problem, = give me a call.

Sincerely,