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

May 22, 1997

50-366

Mr. H. L. Sumner, Jr.
Vice President
Southern Nuclear Operating
Company, Inc.
Post Office Box 1295
Birmingham, Alabama 35201-1295

SUBJECT: ASSESSMENT OF FEEDWATER SPARGER INSERVICE INSPECTION - EDWIN I. HATCH NUCLEAR PLANT, UNIT 2 (TAC NO. M98386)

Dear Mr. Sumner:

By letter dated April 4, 1997, and supplemented May 7, 1997, you submitted a description of the indications associated with the "A" feedwater sparger thermal sleeve to the tee weld, and with tack welds on two bolt locations on one of the end brackets at Hatch Unit 2.

The indications on the "A" sparger thermal sleeve are located on the bottom of the pipe and are predominately axial in orientation. They are characterized as four primary indications with minor branching. One of the indications is approximately 4 inches long and appears to traverse the sleeve to the tee weld. Another indication is approximately 2 inches long within the sparger tee next to the tee weld. The two remaining indications are approximately 1.5 inches long within the thermal sleeve next to the tee weld.

The indications on one of the end brackets are located on the tack welds of the nut to the end bracket at each of the two bolt locations.

Your evaluation of the flaw indications concluded that the feedwater spargers do not provide a safety-related function. However, you indicated that leakage from sparger cracks could cause thermal cycling in the feedwater nozzle blend radius and potentially cause cracking. Furthermore, you stated that the Hatch Unit 2 feedwater nozzles have been inspected and no cracking has been observed. Even if one considers the potential thermal cycling, there are no safety consequences since the feedwater nozzle has been analyzed with a 1/4-inch crack and found to be acceptable. The leakage from the indications in the thermal sleeve to the tee weld would not result in an adverse impact to safety-related equipment. The presence of the cracked tack welds on the end bracket does not adversely affect the function or the structural integrity of the feedwater sparger. Therefore, Hatch Unit 2 operation for one cycle is acceptable. Also, your April 4, 1997, letter provided your commitment to perform additional inspections of the affected areas during the next Unit 2 refueling outage currently scheduled for the fall of 1998. The affected areas should include the feedwater nozzle blend radius, and all the cracked components.

Based on its review of your submittals, the staff is in general agreement with your evaluation, and has concluded that the flaw indications in the feedwater sparger and the tack welds are acceptable for Hatch Unit 2 operation for one cycle. If concerns arise during the NRC staff's review of other plants, they will be promptly communicated to you. Subsequently, if the staff determines that the flaw and the piping integrity evaluations are unacceptable, you will be expected to take prompt action to place the facility in a safe configuration, consistent with the requirements of NRC regulations and the Hatch technical specifications.

If you have any questions in this matter, please contact me at (301) 415-1496.

Sincerely,

Kahtan N. Jabbour

Kahtan N. Jabbour, Project Manager
Project Directorate II-2
Division of Reactor Projects - I/II
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

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cc: See next page

Based on its review of your submittals, the staff is in general agreement with your evaluation, and has concluded that the flaw indications in the feedwater sparger and the tack welds are acceptable for Hatch Unit 2 operation for one cycle. If concerns arise during the NRC staff's review of other plants, they will be promptly communicated to you. Subsequently, if the staff determines that the flaw and the piping integrity evaluations are unacceptable, you will be expected to take prompt action to place the facility in a safe configuration, consistent with the requirements of NRC regulations and the Hatch technical specifications.

If you have any questions in this matter, please contact me at (301) 415-1496.

Sincerely,

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY:

Kahtan N. Jabbour, Project Manager
Project Directorate II-2
Division of Reactor Projects - I/II
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

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