June 30, 1997

Mr. William T. Cottle
Group Vice-President, Nuclear
Houston Lighting & Power Company
South Texas Project Electric
Generating Station
P. O. Box 289
Wadsworth, TX 77483

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION - SOUTH TEXAS PROJECT, UNITS 1 AND 2 (TAC NOS. M95401 AND M95402)

Dear Mr. Cottle:

The staff has reviewed your application for amendment dated June 14, 1996, as supplemented March 17, 1997, to allow the use of laser-welded sleeving for defective steam generator tube repair at the South Texas Project, Units 1 and 2. Your response to the enclosed request for additional information within 30 days is needed for the staff to continue to process your request.

If you have any questions regarding this request, please contact me at (301) 415-3267.

Sincerely,

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY:

Janet L. Kennedy, Project Manager
Project Directorate IV-1
Division of Reactor Projects III/IV
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket Nos. 50-498 and 50-499

Enclosure: Request for Additional Information

cc w/encl: See next page

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

June 30, 1997

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Executive Vice-President &
General Manager, Nuclear
Houston Lighting & Power Company
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Project Directorate IV-1
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Austin, TX 78757-1024

REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
REGARDING PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO ALLOW
LASER WELDED SLEEVING

1. The staff understands that the South Texas Project (STP) plans to perform post weld heat treatment (PWHT) of the sleeve laser welds. The PWHT is not explicitly required in the generic topical sleeve report nor is it in the STP-specific topical sleeve report. Since commitments outside the Technical Specifications (TS) are subject to change under 10 CFR 50.59, the staff requests STP place the PWHT commitment in the TS. As an alternative, submit an evaluation for staff review and approval of why it is acceptable to not perform the PWHT.

2. Recent experience at the Kewaunee plant indicates that visual test (VT) examinations of welded freespan joints may detect significant process-induced defects not detectable or resolvable by ultrasonic tests (UT) or eddy current (EC) examinations. The topical reports do not require a VT of the freespan welds. Please provide the details of the nondestructive examination qualification efforts that justify the use of UT and EC inspections, without a VT, as a sufficient means to demonstrate acceptable sleeve weld quality.

3. The staff understands that STP plans to use the Cecco-5 EC probe to inspect the sleeve welds as part of the sleeve installation acceptance process.

   a. Discuss how any and all EC indications will be dispositioned.

   b. WCAP-14653 discusses the use of the Cecco-5 probe to detect various process anomalies such as blow holes and weld cracking as well as to detect the presence of a PWHT. Provide a description of how the Cecco-5 was qualified for these specific applications.

   c. Recent experiences at Maine Yankee indicate the Cecco-5 probe is not as sensitive to weld indications as the Plus Point probe. Discuss how this issue applies to STP's plans for inspection of the sleeve welds. Discuss why the use of the Cecco-5 probe as your installation acceptance tool is acceptable.

4. At Maine Yankee, EC indications in the sleeve welded joints were detected using the Plus Point probe during sleeve inspections in 1997. Currently, there are no plans to perform metallurgical evaluations of pulled sleeve/tube assemblies that had EC indications. Thus the cause of the EC indications is unknown. For example, it is not conclusively known whether the indications are process-induced or service-induced degradation. The structural and leakage integrity of the sleeve welds with these indications is also unknown. Discuss how this issue applies to STP and include in your discussions how STP plans to respond to this issue.

ENCLOSURE

5. The staff understands that tests will be performed at Unit 2 to confirm the lower rolled joint provides adequate pullout resistance and primary-to-secondary leakage resistance.

   a. Describe confirmatory tests (e.g., number of samples, applied pressure differentials, hold times, leakage measurement techniques, etc.). Include in your description how the results will be evaluated and applied to STP.

   b. Discuss specific actions to be taken by STP in the event the confirmatory test results invalidate previous structural or leakage qualification tests or the sleeve installation process.