



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

SAFETY EVALUATION BY THE OFFICE OF NUCLEAR REACTOR REGULATION

TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY

BROWNS FERRY NUCLEAR PLANT UNITS 1, 2, AND 3

DOCKET NOS. 50-259, 50-260, AND 50-296

1.0 INTRODUCTION

On August 8, 1996, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission amended its regulations to incorporate by reference the 1992 Edition of Subsection IWE and IWL of Section XI of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) Boiler and Pressure Vessel Code (ASME Code) into Title 10 of the Code of Federal Regulations (10 CFR) Section 50.55a, "Codes and Standards." These subsections provide the requirements for inservice inspection (ISI) of Class CC (concrete) and Class MC (metallic) containments of light-water reactors. The effective date of the amended rule was September 9, 1996, and has accelerated implementation provisions such that licensees are to incorporate the requirements into their ISI program and complete the first containment inspection within 5 years of the effective date. In addition, any repair or replacement activity to be performed after the effective date must be in accordance with the respective requirements of Subsection IWE or IWL. However, a licensee may submit a request for relief from the implementation date of the amended rule.

On February 13, 1997, the Tennessee Valley Authority (the licensee) submitted a request for relief from the requirements discussed above for the Browns Ferry Nuclear Plant (BFN) Units 1, 2, and 3.

2.0 EVALUATION

The licensee, citing hardship and/or difficulty without a compensating increase in quality and safety above that provided by current programs, requests relief from the implementation date of the amended 10 CFR 50.55a until October 24, 1997. The licensee plans to perform routine maintenance and inspections activities during a scheduled BFN Unit 2 refueling outage beginning in September 1997. Given the accelerated implementation schedule of the rule and the immediate effective date for repair and replacement activities, the immediate implementation of repair and replacement requirements for emergent work activities during that outage would demand licensee action in a short period of time. This results in hardship and/or difficulty without an increase in quality and safety above current programs.

There are no known safety concerns with the BFN Unit 1, 2, and 3 containments, which would compromise their ability to perform their intended safety functions. All improvements are to be performed in accordance with the scope of the current containment ISI and repair and replacement program, which is based on the 1989 Edition of the ASME Code. The licensee has developed an interim quality assurance program, which includes provisions for repair and replacement, inspection, materials procurement, maintenance, documentation,

9707310202 970728
PDR ADOCK 05000259
P PDR

and reporting to be utilized until October 24, 1997. The interim program will provide a sufficient level of quality and safety during the period of relief between September 9, 1996 and October 24, 1997.

3.0 CONCLUSION

Based on the review of the licensee's relief request, the staff agrees with the licensee that the immediate implementation of the requirements of the 1992 Edition of the ASME Code for repair and replacement activities, as required by 10 CFR 50.55a, will result in hardship for the licensee. The staff also finds that the use of the 1989 Edition of the ASME Code and the associated quality assurance requirements, as supplemented by the site-specific quality assurance program developed by the licensee, provides an acceptable level of quality and safety. Accordingly, the licensee's relief request for delayed implementation of 10 CFR 50.55a is authorized, pursuant to 10 CFR 50.55a(a)3(3)(i), until October 24, 1997.

Principal Contributor: T. Cerovski

Dated: July 28, 1997