

April 15, 1988

Docket No. 50-423

Mr. Edward J. Mrocza
Senior Vice President
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Northeast Nuclear Energy Company
P. O. Box 270
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Dear Mr.Mrocza:

SUBJECT: TEMPORARY WAIVER OF COMPLIANCE FROM TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION
3.6.3, "CONTAINMENT ISOLATION VALVES (TAC NO. 67867)

Re: Millstone Nuclear Power Station, Unit No. 3

By letter dated April 14, 1988 you requested a temporary waiver of compliance to allow the restart of Millstone Unit No. 3 while an emergency Technical Specification (TS) amendment is being processed by the NRC. The amendment to TS Section 3.6.3, "Containment Isolation Valves", to Facility Operating License No. NPF-49 would remove unnecessary restrictions on mode changes and would be consistent with guidance provided by the staff in Generic Letter 87-09, dated June 1987.

In your letter you noted that three containment isolation valves were found to be inoperable on March 1, 1988 during surveillance testing and that the action statements required in TS 3.6.3, "Containment Isolation Valves", were satisfied allowing the plant to continue operation for an unlimited period of time. The three valves are the pressurizer relief tank gas sample line isolation valve 3SSR*CV8026, pressurizer vapor space sample line isolation valve 3SSR*CTV20, and pressurizer liquid sample line isolation valve 3SSR*CTV22. All three sample lines are 3/4" and not normally used during plant operation, nor are they required for post-accident sampling. The valves all located inside containment were isolated by closing their corresponding valves outside containment and removing power from the valve operators. The repair to these valves would require that the plant be in the cold shutdown condition.

On April 13, 1988 Millstone Unit No. 3 tripped placing the plant in the hot shutdown condition. The cause of the plant trip, low condenser vacuum due to intake structure travelling screen blockage, is being corrected. However, TS Section 3.0.4 states that entry into an operational mode is not permitted unless the conditions for the limiting condition for operation are met without reliance on provisions contained in the action statements. This requirement will not allow the restart of Millstone Unit No. 3 with the three isolation valves being inoperable, while continued operation was allowed because the action statements in TS Section 3.6.3 were met.

The staff issued Generic Letter 87-09 on June 4, 1987 to address the implementation of short-term improvements to TS. One of these improvements recognizes the restrictions in mode changes by imposed TS 3.0.4, "Limiting Condition for Operation", which restricts facility operation when conformance with action requirements provides an acceptable level of safety for continued operation.

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We have made a preliminary review of the justification provided in your letter and conclude that operation of Millstone Unit No. 3 in conformance with the action requirements of TS 3.6.3 provides an acceptable level of safety and does not present any undue risk to the health and safety of the public. This conclusion is based upon the justification provided in your April 14, 1988 letter and upon the guidance presented in Generic Letter 87-09.

This letter grants a temporary waiver of compliance with the cited TS requirements and will be in effect until we complete the processing of an emergency license amendment.

Sincerely,

original signed by

Bruce A. Boger, Assistant Director
for Region I Reactors
Division of Reactor Projects I/II
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

cc: See next page

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Mr. E. J. Mroczka
Northeast Nuclear Energy Company

Millstone Nuclear Power Station
Unit No. 3

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