

50-271



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

November 9, 1998

Mr. Gregory A. Maret
Director of Operations
Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Corporation
185 Old Ferry Road
Brattleboro, VT 05301

SUBJECT: REQUEST TO USE CODE CASE N560 AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE
REQUIREMENTS OF ASME CODE, SECTION XI, TABLE IWB-2500-1 AT
VERMONT YANKEE NUCLEAR POWER STATION (TAC NO. M99389)

Dear Mr. Maret:

By letters dated August 6, 1997, August 15, 1997, October 23, 1997, July 31, 1998, and September 4, 1998, you requested that the NRC approve ASME Code Case N-560, "Alternative Examination Requirements for Class 1, Category B-J Piping Welds" for use at Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Station (Vermont Yankee). The Code Case was proposed as an alternative to the requirements of ASME Code, Section XI Table IWB-2500-1 and relates to examination of Class 1, Category B-J, piping welds at Vermont Yankee. Specifically, you proposed to reduce the examination of ASME Code, Section XI, Category B-J welds from 113 welds to 41 welds and requested to use Code Case N-560 which permits this reduction as long as the licensee uses a probabilistic risk-informed approach in the selection of the welds. You also have augmented the implementation of Code Case N-560 at Vermont Yankee by using a methodology approved by the Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI) in EPRI TR-106706.

We have reviewed the proposed request as a site specific request applicable only to Vermont Yankee. The results of our review indicated that you have provided an acceptable alternative to the requirements of ASME Code Section XI and have shown that implementation of the program would result in an insignificant change in risk even with fewer inspections, since the inspections will take place where degradation mechanisms are more likely to occur, and procedures and personnel will target these specific locations using improved techniques and expanded volumes. We have determined that the alternative method described in your submittal (ASME Code Case N-560 as augmented by EPRI TR-106706) provides equivalent or better examination criteria for Class 1 Category B-J welds than that provided by the current Section XI requirements.

We therefore conclude that authorization of your proposed alternative would provide an acceptable level of quality and safety. Pursuant to 10 CFR 50.55a(a)(3)(i) the alternative is authorized. This authorization does not constitute an NRC approval of Code Case N-560 for generic use. The suitability of Code Case N-560 for generic use will be determined following the staff's review of the Case. It is expected that the results of the staff's review will be documented in Regulatory Guide 1.147, "Inservice Inspection Code Case Acceptability - ASME Section XI Division 1."

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Our detailed evaluation and conclusions are documented in the enclosed safety evaluation.

Sincerely,

Original signed by

Cecil O. Thomas, Director
Project Directorate I-3
Division of Reactor Projects - I/II
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket No. 50-271

Enclosure: Safety Evaluation

cc w/encl: See next page

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