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the southern electric system

W. G. Hairston, III
Senior Vice President
Nuclear Operations

December 7, 1988

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U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
ATTN: Document Control Desk
Washington, D. C. 20555

PLANT VOGTLE - UNIT 1
NRC DOCKET 50-424
OPERATING LICENSE NPF-68
RESPONSE TO NRC BULLETIN 88-09

Gentlemen:

NRC Bulletin 88-09 requires submittal of a written response that a) confirms that an inspection program consistent with that requested in Action Item 1 of the Bulletin has been established and b) confirms that inspections of the thimble tubes have been performed and that appropriate corrective actions were taken. The Bulletin requests this response within 30 days of completion of the thimble tube inspections.

Thimble tube inspections as required by Bulletin 88-09 were completed for Vogtle Unit 1 on November 10, 1988. The inspections were performed by the Westinghouse Nuclear Service Division and consisted of eddy current testing for each of the flux thimble tubes. Inspection results revealed wall loss indications on twenty (20) of the fifty-eight (58) thimble tubes due to external wear at support locations. The indicated wall loss ranged from a minimum of 16% for one thimble to a maximum of 40% for one thimble. Westinghouse states that the accuracy of their eddy current testing is + 10%. In addition, Westinghouse states that the allowable wall loss criteria is 60% of wall thickness. The Westinghouse evaluation of our data concluded that all thimble tubes were found to be acceptable for continued operation provided proper corrective action was taken.

Predictions were made by Westinghouse regarding the anticipated wall loss which could exist by the end of the next 18 month operating cycle if no corrective action was taken. These predictions were based on the understanding that the observed wall losses occurred within the first 18 month operating cycle. Based on the Westinghouse predictions, twelve (12) of the thimble tubes could have exceeded the 60% maximum wall loss acceptance criteria before the end of the next 18 month cycle. To preclude this possibility, Westinghouse recommended corrective action to reposition (withdraw) these twelve (12) thimble tubes approximately two (2) inches before returning Unit 1 to power. Repositioning of these twelve (12) thimble tubes was completed November 12, 1988.

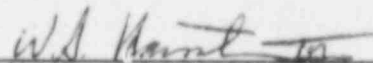
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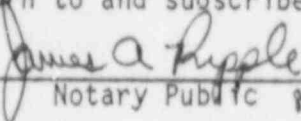
Since thimble tube thinning was indicated by this inspection, GPC will reinspect the Unit 1 thimble tubes during the next refueling outage. Once this second inspection is performed, it will be possible to refine the wall loss predictions for the future cycles and therefore determine whether inspection during each future refueling outage will be warranted. Unit 2 thimble tubes will be inspected during the first Unit 2 refueling outage as required by the Bulletin.

Mr. W. G. Hairston, III states that he is a Senior Vice President of Georgia Power Company and is authorized to execute this oath on behalf of Georgia Power Company and that, to the best of his knowledge and belief, the facts set forth in this letter are true.

GEORGIA POWER COMPANY

By: 
W. G. Hairston, III

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 7th day of December, 1988.


Notary Public 8-24-82

HMAJORS/ijb

c: Georgia Power Company
Mr. C. K. McCoy
Mr. G. Beckhold, Jr.
Mr. W. B. Shipman
Mr. R. J. Florian

U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Mr. M. L. Ernst, Acting Regional Administrator
Mr. J. B. Hopkins, Licensing Project Manager, NRR (2 copies)
Mr. J. F. Rogge, Senior Resident Inspector - Operations, Vogtle.