



UNITED STATES  
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

October 31, 1997

Mr. Leon Eliason  
Chief Nuclear Officer & President-  
Nuclear Business Unit  
Public Service Electric & Gas  
Company  
Post Office Box 236  
Hancocks Bridge, NJ 08038

SUBJECT: RELIEF REQUEST FROM AUGMENTED INSPECTION OF REACTOR PRESSURE VESSEL  
CIRCUMFERENTIAL WELDS IN HOPE CREEK GENERATING STATION  
(TAC NO. M99478)

Dear Mr. Eliason:

By letter dated August 29, 1997, as supplemented by letters dated September 16 and October 1, 1997, Public Service Electric and Gas Company (PSE&G or the licensee) requested NRC approval of an alternative reactor vessel weld examination pursuant to the provisions of 10 CFR 50.55a(a)(3)(i) and 10 CFR 50.55a(g)(6)(ii)(A)(5) for the Hope Creek Generating Station (HCGS) for the next two operating cycles. PSE&G has proposed inspections of essentially 100 percent of the longitudinal seam welds in the reactor pressure vessel (RPV) shell and essentially 0 percent of the RPV circumferential seam welds, which will result in partial examination (2-3 percent) of the circumferential welds at their points of intersection with the longitudinal welds.

These inspections were proposed as an alternative to the augmented examinations specified in 10 CFR 50.55a(g)(6)(ii)(A)(2) for circumferential welds and as an alternative to the Inservice Inspection requirements for circumferential welds in the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) Code, Section XI, 1983 Edition, through Summer 1983 Addenda, for circumferential welds.

In Information Notice (IN) 97-63, "Status of NRC Staff's Review of BWRVIP-05," the staff indicated that it would consider such requests, when technically justified, from Boiling Water Reactor (BWR) licensees who are scheduled to perform inspections of the BWR RPV circumferential welds during the fall 1997 or spring 1998 outage seasons. BWRVIP-05 provides BWR Owners Group recommendations for RPV shell weld inspections.

The NRC staff has reviewed the licensee's request and concluded that the HCGS RPV can be operated during the next two operating periods with an acceptable level of quality and safety and the inspection of the circumferential welds can be delayed for two operating periods. Therefore, the proposed alternative is authorized pursuant to 10 CFR 50.55a(a)(3)(i).

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L. Eliason

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October 31, 1997

Further details regarding the staff's evaluation and conclusions are contained in the enclosed Safety Evaluation.

Sincerely,

/s/

David H. Jaffe, Senior Project Manager  
Project Directorate I-2  
Division of Reactor Projects - I/II  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket No. 50-354

Enclosure: Safety Evaluation

cc w/encl: See next page

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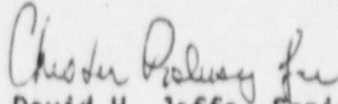
L. Eliason

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Sincerely,



David H. Jaffe, Senior Project Manager  
Project Directorate I-2  
Division of Reactor Projects - I/II  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket No. 50-354

Enclosure: Safety Evaluation

cc w/encl: See next page

Mr. Leon R. Eliason  
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Company

Hope Creek Generating Station

cc:

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