



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

April 9, 2021

Mr. Brian H. Whitley, Director
Regulatory Affairs
Southern Nuclear Operating Company, Inc.
3535 Colonnade Parkway, Bin N-226-EC
Birmingham, AL 35243

SUBJECT: ALTERNATIVE REQUIREMENTS FOR ASME SECTION XI EXAMINATION
COVERAGE OF WELDOLET BRANCH CONNECTION WELDS, VOGTLE
ELECTRIC GENERATING PLANT, UNITS 3 AND 4 (EPID L-2020-LLR-0159)

Dear Mr. Whitley:

By letter dated December 23, 2020 (Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS) Accession No. ML20358A178), as revised and replaced in its entirety by letter dated February 9, 2021, (ADAMS Accession No. ML21040A164), Southern Nuclear Operating Company (SNC or licensee) submitted a request to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) to use an alternative to certain American Society of Mechanical Engineers Boiler and Pressure Vessel Code (ASME Code), Section XI for applicable preservice inspection (PSI) of four ASME Code Class 1 weldolet-to-pipe branch connection welds, at the Vogtle Electric Generating Plant (VEGP), Units 3 and 4. SNC stated that the alternative (VEGP 3&4-PSI/ISI-ALT-15R1) was submitted in accordance with Title 10 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (10 CFR):

10 CFR 50.55a(z)(2), the licensee requested to use the proposed alternative on the basis that the alternative provides reasonable assurance of structural integrity.

As set forth in the attached safety evaluation, the NRC staff determined that the proposed alternative is acceptable. The proposed alternative would allow the licensee to perform single-sided ultrasonic testing (UT) examinations of the weldolet-to-pipe branch connection welds with a reduced examination coverage and perform a supplemental "best effort" examination to the maximum extent possible during the preservice inspection at VEGP, Units 3 and 4. The NRC staff finds there is reasonable assurance of structural integrity of the welds subject to VEGP 3&4-PSI/ISI-ALT-15R1 as circumscribed in the revision dated February 9, 2021.

Accordingly, the NRC staff finds that the licensee has adequately addressed all of the regulatory requirements set forth in 10 CFR 50.55a(z)(2) and concludes that the proposed alternative provides reasonable assurance of structural integrity of the subject welds. Therefore, the NRC authorizes the use of VEGP 3&4-PSI/ISI-ALT-15R1 for the preservice inspection, and the subsequent inservice inspections at VEGP, Units 3 and 4. All other requirements of ASME Code, Sections III and XI and 10 CFR 50.55a, for which an alternative has not been specifically requested and authorized remain applicable including third party review by the Authorized Nuclear Inspector and Authorized Nuclear Inservice Inspector.

B. Whitley

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If you have any questions, please contact the Senior Project Manager, Billy Gleaves, at (301) 415-5848.

Sincerely,



Signed by Lopez-Santiago, Omar
on 04/09/21

Omar R. López-Santiago, Chief
Vogtle Project Office
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket No(s): 52-025
52-026

Enclosure:
Safety Evaluation

cc: See next page

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 DATED: APRIL 9, 2021

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