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November 1, 1999

OFFICE
FOR
ADJUTANT

The Secretary of the Commission
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, DC 20555-0001

DOCKET NUMBER
PROPOSED RULE **PR 50**
(64FR44860)

SUBJECT: NEI Comments on Elimination of the Requirement for Noncombustible
Fire Barrier Penetration Seal Materials and Other Minor Changes
(64FR44860)

NEI (Nuclear Energy Institute) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the
proposed rule in 64FR44860, and support its conclusions.

In particular, we agree with the following NRC staff conclusions:

- There are no reports of fires that have challenged the ability of fire-rated penetration seals to confine a fire
- A large body of fire endurance tests had established the fire-resistive capabilities of the penetration seal materials, designs, and configurations installed in nuclear power plants
- If penetration seals are properly designed, configured, installed, inspected, tested, and maintained, there is reasonable assurance that they will provide the fire resistance of the tested configuration, maintain the fire-resistive integrity of the fire barriers in which they are installed, and confine the fire to the area of origin.

Consequently, we recommend prompt issuance of a final rule as described in the *Federal Register*.

Please address any questions about these comments to Mr. Fred Emerson at 202-739-8086 or fae@nei.org.

Sincerely,

David J. Modeen

c: Ms. Daniele Oudinot, NRR

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