

April 11, 2002

Mr. Gregg R. Overbeck  
Senior Vice President, Nuclear  
Arizona Public Service Company  
P. O. Box 52034  
Phoenix, AZ 85072-2034

SUBJECT: BULLETIN 2001-01, "CIRCUMFERENTIAL CRACKING OF REACTOR PRESSURE VESSEL HEAD PENETRATION NOZZLES," RESPONSE FOR PALO VERDE NUCLEAR GENERATING STATION, UNITS 1, 2, AND 3 (TAC NOS. MB2647, MB2648, AND MB2649)

Dear Mr. Overbeck:

On August 3, 2001, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) staff issued Bulletin 2001-01, "Circumferential Cracking of Reactor Pressure Vessel Head Penetration Nozzles," to the industry requesting that addressees provide information related to the structural integrity of the reactor pressure vessel head penetration (VHP) nozzles for their respective facilities, including the extent of VHP nozzle leakage and cracking that has been found to date, the inspections and repairs that have been undertaken to satisfy applicable regulatory requirements, and the basis for concluding that their plans for future inspections will ensure compliance with applicable regulatory requirements at their respective pressurized water reactor plants. You were requested to respond to Items 1 and 4 of the Bulletin within 30 days of its issuance.

You provided your response for Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station, Units 1, 2, and 3, in the letters dated September 4 and December 6, 2001, and January 29 and March 15, 2002. The letter of January 29, 2002, was in response to our request for clarification that was documented in our letter of November 5, 2001. The letter of March 15, 2002, revised the earlier responses to the bulletin in that the 100 percent inspection of the VHPs, and the reactor head vent nozzle, will be performed using either an effective visual examination, an under the head surface and/or volumetric examination using a combination of eddy current, liquid penetrant, and ultrasonic examination techniques as necessary.

The NRC staff finds that you have provided the requested information and there is reasonable assurance that the public health and safety will be maintained. Your proposed inspection scope and schedule described in your responses, which included the description of your plan to examine "all" or "100 percent" of the VHPs at your facility during the next scheduled outage, were integral to the NRC staff's finding. It is the NRC staff's expectation that you will submit a revised response to the Bulletin if you make any substantive changes to the schedule and/or scope of future inspections for the units. If warranted by such changes, the NRC staff will re-evaluate this issue for the units.

Gregg R. Overbeck

- 2 -

Addressees are reminded that Item 5 of the Bulletin requested the following information within 30 days after plant restart following the next refueling outage for each of the three units:

- a. a description of the extent of VHP nozzle leakage and cracking detected at your plant, including the number, location, size, and nature of each crack detected;
- b. if cracking is identified, a description of the inspections (type, scope, qualification requirements, and acceptance criteria), repairs, and other corrective actions you have taken to satisfy applicable regulatory requirements. This information is requested only if there are any changes from prior information submitted in accordance with this bulletin.

If you have any questions or comments concerning this issue, please contact me via telephone at (301) 415-1307.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Jack Donohew, Senior Project Manager, Section 2  
Project Directorate IV  
Division of Licensing Project Management  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket Nos. STN 50-528, STN 50-529,  
and STN 50-530

cc: See next page

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- b. if cracking is identified, a description of the inspections (type, scope, qualification requirements, and acceptance criteria), repairs, and other corrective actions you have taken to satisfy applicable regulatory requirements. This information is requested only if there are any changes from prior information submitted in accordance with this bulletin.

If you have any questions or comments concerning this issue, please contact me via telephone

Sincerely,  
/RA/

Jack Donohew, Senior Project Manager, Section 2  
Project Directorate IV  
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Palo Verde Generating Station, Units 1, 2, and 3

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