

June 20, 2003

LICENSEE: South Texas Project Nuclear Operating Company

FACILITY: South Texas Project, Unit 1

SUBJECT: SUMMARY OF MEETING WITH STPNOC REGARDING SOUTH TEXAS PROJECT, UNIT 1 REACTOR VESSEL AND BOTTOM MOUNTED INSTRUMENTATION PENETRATION INTERFACE LEAKAGE

On May 1, 2003, STP Nuclear Operating Company (STPNOC), the licensee for South Texas Project (STP), Units 1 and 2, met with the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) staff at the NRC Headquarters. The purpose of the meeting was for STPNOC to brief the NRC management regarding STPNOC's efforts to address the issues arising from the April 12, 2003 discoveries of indications of leakage from the STP, Unit 1 bottom mounted instrument (BMI) penetrations 1 and 46. There are 58 penetrations at STP, Unit 1. Enclosure 1 contains the licensee's presentation view-graphs. A list of meeting attendees is included as Enclosure 2.

The STPNOC outlined its desired meeting outcomes to keep NRC fully informed; and to ensure that NRC understands STPNOC's non-destructive examination (NDE) process, repair options, root and probable cause investigation process, and significant milestones for corrective actions and resolution of concerns.

The licensee stated that a very small amount of residue (approximately 150 milligrams at penetration 1 and 3 milligrams at penetration 46) was accumulated at the two penetration interfaces. Chemical analyses revealed the presence of boron in the deposits indicating the source of the leakage to be primary coolant. The ratio of Cs-134 and Cs-137 isotopes in the deposits, respectively, indicated the age of the residue to be up to 4 years. The licensee stated that it inspects the exterior of the reactor vessel bottom each refueling outage and other outages that exceeds 72 hours. Previous inspections did not identify any leakage indications at penetrations 1 and 46.

The STPNOC discussed the results of both visual examination and chemical analysis of residue found at the two penetrations, and some potential causal mechanisms. The licensee discussed its plans for further NDE to help determine the type of flaws, causes of the flaws, and options for repair of the condition. The licensee also provided a schedule of milestones of activities to address the BMI leakage issue.

The core will be offloaded by mid-May. NDE and analysis will be completed by late-May. Design approval relief request will be submitted to NRC for review by early June. Repairs will commence in mid-June. Final breaker closure is envisaged by STPNOC for late-summer.

The licensee stated that it has been in communication with the industry, and has received considerable help from the industry, in its efforts to evaluate the root cause and probable cause of the leakage indications. The licensee is employing teams of experts in concert with its senior staff to assist in its on-going evaluations. The licensee stated that Unit 1 will not be restarted

until the root cause has been determined and the condition has been repaired. The licensee proposed a second meeting for the first week in June.

In response to the licensee's presentation, the NRC staff stated that the licensee's response following the discovery of BMI leakage has been prompt, and the licensee has maintained a high level of activity.

Following the licensee's presentation public participants asked questions of the NRC staff and the licensee. The NRC staff and the licensee provided clarifications. Following is a summary of the questions and answers included in the exchange:

Question: What are other plants doing about the issue?

Answer: The staff is doing general survey to address the other plants' activities.

Question: How will the data collected by STPNOC be used to benefit the plant's understanding of the issues?

Answer: The licensee answered that the data will be used as best as they can to learn all that is possible to benefit not only the plant but the entire industry.

Question: What are the repair costs?

Answer: It is too early to say.

The meeting was then adjourned.

*/RA/*

Mohan C. Thadani, Senior Project Manager, Section 1  
Project Directorate IV  
Division of Licensing Project Management  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket No. 50-498

Enclosures: 1. View-graphs  
2. List of Attendees

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EReichelt

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TFarnholtz, RIV

VDricks, RIV

ACCESSION NUMBER: ML0

OFFICE	PDIV-1/PM	PDIV-1/LA	PDIV-1/SC
NAME	MThadani	MMcAllister	RGramm
DATE	6/17/03	6/13/03	6/16/03

MEETING PARTICIPANTS  
FOR  
MEETING BETWEEN STPNOC AND NRC  
ON MAY 1, 2003

<u>Participants</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
Michael Leishlear	STP
Ulhas Patil	STP
Ron Baker	STP
Bill Humble	STP
T. J. Jordan	STP
Steve Thomas	STP
Joe Loya	STP
Wayne Harrison	STP
Mark McBurnett	STP
Leonard Wert	NRC
Eric Reichelt	NRC
Matthew Mitchell	NRC
Edmund Sullivan	NRC
Keith Wichman	NRC
Jay Collins	NRC
David Terao	NRC
Stephen Monarque	NRC
Barry Elliot	NRC
Francis Grubelich	NRC
Donald Harrison	NRC
Mike Tschiltz	NRC
Veronica Klein	NRC
Jim Strnisha	NRC
Michelle Honcharik	NRC
Bart Fu	NRC
Steve Long	NRC
John Minns	NRC
DyLanne Duvigneaud	NRC
Steven Unikewicz	NRC
Bill Bateman	NRC
Edward Andruszkiewicz	NRC
Bill Reckley	NRC
Bob Gramm	NRC
Herb Berkow	NRC
Karen Gott	NRC
Mark Hartzman	NRC
Bob Davis	NRC
Rich Barrett	NRC
Donald Naujock	NRC
Steve Bloom	NRC

<u>Participants</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
Anthony Mendiola	NRC
David Fischer	NRC
Mohan Thadani	NRC
Chris Gratton	NRC
Jack Foster	NRC
Eva Brown	NRC
Scott Burnell	NRC
Dwight Chamberlain	NRC
Russ Bywater	NRC
Alex Marion	NEI
Jim Riley	NEI
David Lochbaum	UCS
Frank Ammirato	EPRI
Joe Roarty	DNFSB
Toshiro Asakana	JAFRI
Kazuo Fujiiki	JAFRI
Taucher	Taucher International
Jim Riccio	Greenpeace
Altheia Wyche	SERCH Licensing/Bechtel
Terry Pickens	Null Management Company
Daniel Horner	McGraw-Hill
David Udoff	Energy Intelligence
Deann Releigh	Sciencetech
Poo Yoon	KHNP
C. Brinkman	Westinghouse
Ed Spiegel	Westinghouse
Al Gutterman	Morgan, Lewis, & Bockius
Al Butlauage	RGE
Roger Huston	Licensing Support Services
Phillip Rush	MPR Associates
Dan Salter	HGP, Inc.
Leslie Spain	Dominion General

South Texas, Units 1 & 2

cc:

Mr. Cornelius F. O'Keefe  
Senior Resident Inspector  
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
P. O. Box 910  
Bay City, TX 77414

A. Ramirez/C. M. Canady  
City of Austin  
Electric Utility Department  
721 Barton Springs Road  
Austin, TX 78704

Mr. L. K. Blaylock  
Mr. W. C. Gunst  
City Public Service Board  
P. O. Box 1771  
San Antonio, TX 78296

Mr. C. A. Johnson/A. C. Bakken  
AEP Texas Central Company  
P. O. Box 289  
Mail Code: N5022  
Wadsworth, TX 77483

INPO  
Records Center  
700 Galleria Parkway  
Atlanta, GA 30339-3064

Regional Administrator, Region IV  
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
611 Ryan Plaza Drive, Suite 400  
Arlington, TX 76011

D. G. Tees/R. L. Balcom  
Texas Genco, LP  
P. O. Box 1700  
Houston, TX 77251

Judge, Matagorda County  
Matagorda County Courthouse  
1700 Seventh Street  
Bay City, TX 77414

A. H. Gutterman, Esq.  
Morgan, Lewis & Bockius  
1111 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20004

Mr. T. J. Jordan, Vice President  
Engineering & Technical Services  
STP Nuclear Operating Company  
P. O. Box 289  
Wadsworth, TX 77483

S. M. Head, Manager, Licensing  
Nuclear Quality & Licensing Department  
STP Nuclear Operating Company  
P. O. Box 289, Mail Code: N5014  
Wadsworth, TX 77483

Environmental and Natural Resources  
Policy Director  
P. O. Box 12428  
Austin, TX 78711-3189

Jon C. Wood  
Matthews & Branscomb  
112 East Pecan, Suite 1100  
San Antonio, TX 78205

Arthur C. Tate, Director  
Division of Compliance & Inspection  
Bureau of Radiation Control  
Texas Department of Health  
1100 West 49th Street  
Austin, TX 78756

Brian Almon  
Public Utility Commission  
William B. Travis Building  
P. O. Box 13326  
1701 North Congress Avenue  
Austin, TX 78701-3326

South Texas, Units 1 & 2

cc:

Susan M. Jablonski  
Office of Permitting, Remediation  
and Registration  
Texas Commission on  
Environmental Quality  
MC-122  
P.O. Box 13087  
Austin, TX 78711-3087

Mr. Terry Parks, Chief Inspector  
Texas Department of Licensing  
and Regulation  
Boiler Division  
P. O. Box 12157  
Austin, TX 78711

Mr. Ted Enos  
4200 South Hulen  
Suite 630  
Ft. Worth, Texas 76109

Mr. James J. Sheppard  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
STP Nuclear Operating Company  
South Texas Project Electric  
Generating Station  
P. O. Box 289  
Wadsworth, TX 77483