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The Honorable Ivan Selin  
Chairman  
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
Washington, D.C. 20555

Dear Chairman Selin:

SUBJECT: ACRS REVIEW OF THE ADVANCED BOILING WATER REACTOR FINAL  
SAFETY EVALUATION REPORT

During the 404th meeting of the Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards, December 9-11, 1993, we discussed the schedule for completing our review of the NRC staff Final Safety Evaluation Report (FSER) for the General Electric Nuclear Energy (GENE) Advanced Boiling Water Reactor (ABWR) Standard Safety Analysis Report (SSAR). Previous schedules for our review of the ABWR were discussed in the referenced documents.

Our review of the FSER for the ABWR started with an ABWR Subcommittee meeting in October 1993, followed by another meeting in November. (During earlier Subcommittee meetings going back to 1989, we had reviewed ABWR/SER material.) Additional meetings are planned for December and January as advance copies of final draft material become available. Our Subcommittees on Computers in Nuclear Power Plant Operations, Design Acceptance Criteria, Severe Accidents, and Probabilistic Risk Assessment have met to review FSER areas of special interest to them.

The version of the FSER that we are reviewing is thought to cover most GENE submittals through Amendment 31 of the SSAR. This amendment was a reissuance of the complete SSAR in July 1993. Since then, GENE has issued an extensive revision as Amendment 32 and has just issued Amendment 33 on December 7, 1993. The staff intends to update its FSER through Amendment 33 during January 1994.

It appears likely to us that an additional SSAR amendment (beyond 33) will be needed to take care of a significant number of items that we have brought to the attention of GENE during and since our previous reviews of the SSAR (which were based on various earlier amendments). These items include numerous errors and inconsistencies in the SSAR and the absence of certain key information that we believe will be essential to obtaining a favorable Committee report. Some of these items were accommodated in Amendment 32. Items brought to the attention of GENE by late November might be covered in Amendment 33. Additional items are likely to surface during the December and January Subcommittee meetings. All of our items must be closed with a final amendment issued by mid-February, reviewed expeditiously by the NRC staff, and considered by our ABWR Subcommittee at a meeting scheduled for March 9, 1994. We intend to complete our review and issue a final report only after the FSER is revised to reflect the final amendment to the SSAR.

On this basis, our ABWR Subcommittee will prepare, for full Committee consideration in March, a draft report on those portions of the ABWR application which concern safety. Barring untimely receipt of needed information or completion of the FSER revision, we expect to issue a final report to you in April 1994.

Sincerely,

J. Ernest Wilkins, Jr.  
Chairman

References:

1. SECY-93-097, dated April 14, 1993, for the Commissioners from James M. Taylor, NRC Executive Director for Operations, Subject: Integrated Review Schedules for the Evolutionary and Advanced Light Water Reactor Projects
2. SECY-93-041, dated February 18, 1993, for the Commissioners from James M. Taylor, NRC Executive Director for Operations, Subject: Advanced Boiling Water Reactor (ABWR) Review Schedule
3. ACRS Report dated March 18, 1993, to Chairman Selin from Paul Shewmon, ACRS Chairman, Subject: Advanced Boiling Water Reactor (ABWR) Review Schedule