



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

May 7, 2013

Mr. Joseph E. Pollock, Executive Director
Nuclear Energy Institute
1776 I Street NW, Suite 400
Washington, DC 20006-3708

SUBJECT: ELECTRIC POWER RESEARCH INSTITUTE FINAL DRAFT REPORT
XXXXXX, "SEISMIC EVALUATION GUIDANCE: AUGMENTED APPROACH
FOR THE RESOLUTION OF FUKUSHIMA NEAR-TERM TASK FORCE
RECOMMENDATION 2.1: SEISMIC," AS AN ACCEPTABLE ALTERNATIVE TO
THE MARCH 12, 2012, INFORMATION REQUEST FOR SEISMIC
REEVALUATIONS

Dear Mr. Pollock:

On behalf of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), I am responding to the Nuclear Energy Institute's (NEI's) letter¹ of April 9, 2013. Your letter included a discussion of the update to the central and eastern United States (CEUS) ground motion model (GMM); an attached final draft of Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI) Report, "Seismic Evaluation Guidance: Augmented Approach for the Resolution of Fukushima Near-Term Task Force Recommendation 2.1: Seismic" (hereafter referred to as the EPRI Guidance); and attached proposed schedules accounting for the GMM update, implementation of the EPRI Guidance, and seismic resource limitations.

The NEI letter indicates that industry intends to supplement its use of the staff-endorsed "Seismic Evaluation Guidance: Screening Prioritization and Implementation Details (SPID) for the Resolution of Fukushima Near-Term Task Force Recommendation 2.1: Seismic,"² with proposed interim actions, as detailed in the EPRI Guidance. The SPID guidance was the product of significant interaction between the NRC, NEI, EPRI, and other stakeholders at numerous public meetings to support licensee responses to Enclosure 1 of the March 12, 2012, information request³ that was issued by the NRC pursuant to Title 10 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (10 CFR) 50.54(f) (the 50.54(f) letter). As with the SPID guidance, the NRC, NEI, EPRI, and other stakeholders have interacted in several public meetings since November 2012 to discuss the EPRI Guidance document.

The staff has determined that the EPRI Guidance will provide an important demonstration of seismic margin and expedite plant safety enhancements through evaluations and potential near-term modifications of certain core and containment cooling equipment while more comprehensive plant seismic risk evaluations are being performed. The NRC staff has also determined that the schedule modifications provided in the NEI's April 9, 2013, letter are

¹ Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS) Accession No. ML13101A379.

² The SPID guidance document is found in ADAMS under Accession No. ML12333A170. The staff endorsement letter for the SPID guidance is found in ADAMS under Accession No. ML12319A074.

³ The 50.54(f) letter is available in ADAMS under Accession No. ML12053A340.

acceptable since the schedule accounts for seismic resource limitations, EPRI's completion of the update to the GMM for the CEUS, and implementation of the EPRI Guidance evaluations and modifications.

Ground Motion Model

The 50.54(f) letter requested that those licensees whose plants are located in the CEUS use NUREG-2115, "Central and Eastern United States Seismic Source Characterization for Nuclear Facilities," and the appropriate EPRI (2004, 2006) GMM to characterize the seismic hazard for their sites.⁴ Subsequent to the issuance of the 50.54(f) letter, industry informed the staff that it had undertaken a study and determined that the EPRI (2004, 2006) GMM should be updated.⁵ In order to facilitate its eventual review of the updated EPRI GMM, the staff has interacted with NEI, EPRI, and other stakeholders in public meetings on industry's efforts to update the EPRI GMM.

By letter dated January 31, 2013,⁶ NEI transmitted the EPRI draft document, "Draft – EPRI (2004, 2006) Ground-Motion Model (GMM) Review Project" to the NRC, requesting review and approval by February 27, 2013. For the update of its earlier GMM, EPRI used a significant amount of additional data, conducted field investigations, and used more recent methods than were previously available. In performing the GMM update, EPRI has also addressed the concerns of an independent peer review panel, which is an important part of the Senior Seismic Hazard Analysis Committee (SSHAC) guidelines (these guidelines are discussed in NRC's NUREG-2117, "Practical Implementation Guidelines for SSHAC Level 3 and 4 Hazard Studies"). Following a review of the NEI submittal, in a public meeting on February 28, 2013,⁷ the staff expressed concern with EPRI's treatment of uncertainty and the level of documentation in the updated GMM. The staff formally documented these concerns by letter dated March 20, 2013.⁸

Subsequently, in a public meeting on March 26, 2013,⁹ industry presented a revision of its updated EPRI GMM, which demonstrated significant progress towards addressing the staff's concerns with respect to the treatment of uncertainty. Industry also proposed a schedule, including further interactions with NRC staff, for completing the development and documentation of the updated EPRI GMM. In order to complete its update of the EPRI GMM and accompanying documentation, and to allow time for the development of site seismic hazard curves, industry proposed a six month delay from the schedule outlined in the 50.54(f) letter for the submittal of the seismic hazard reevaluations for CEUS plants.

The staff agrees that updated models, methods, and data will provide licensees with the most current information in order to perform the seismic hazard evaluations requested by the 50.54(f) letter. The NRC staff intends to complete its review of the industry's updated CEUS GMM by

⁴ Licensees whose sites are located in the western United States (WUS) were asked to develop a probabilistic seismic hazard analysis consistent with the process used for new reactor licensing under 10 CFR Part 52, "Licenses, Certifications, and Approvals for Nuclear Power Plants."

⁵ By letter dated August 24, 2012, at ADAMS Accession No. ML12240A034, the industry notified staff of its intent to proceed with Phase 2 of the GMM update project.

⁶ The letter can be found in ADAMS at Accession No. ML13059A090.

⁷ The meeting summary and presentation materials can be found in the package in ADAMS at Accession No. ML13106A158.

⁸ The letter can be found in ADAMS at Accession No. ML13078A029.

⁹ The meeting summary and presentation material can be found in the package in ADAMS at Accession No. ML13081A304.

August 30, 2013, if the industry submits the completed documentation of the updated model by June 30, 2013. If the staff is unable to approve the updated EPRI GMM by August 30, 2013, industry is expected to use the staff-approved EPRI (2004, 2006) GMM for the CEUS plant reevaluations.

EPRI Guidance

The EPRI Guidance document provides licensees with additional guidance on the performance of an Expedited Seismic Evaluation Process. The Expedited Seismic Evaluation Process is a screening, evaluation, and equipment modification process to be conducted by licensees to provide additional seismic margin and expedite plant safety enhancements for certain core and containment cooling components while more detailed and comprehensive plant seismic risk evaluations are being performed.

The Expedited Seismic Evaluation Process focuses on the equipment needed to maintain or restore reactor and containment cooling during the initial phase of a severe external event causing an extended loss of all alternating current power as identified in Order EA-12-049, "Order Modifying Licenses with Regard to Requirements for Mitigation Strategies for Beyond-Design-Basis External Events."¹⁰ In response to the Order, NEI developed NEI 12-06, "Diverse and Flexible Coping Strategies (FLEX) Implementation Guide."¹¹ The Expedited Seismic Evaluation Process identifies a subset of FLEX Phase 1 equipment for evaluation and potential modification. This subset of FLEX equipment is installed core and containment cooling equipment and connection points needed during an extended station blackout event.

In particular, the guidance describes a methodology for the evaluation of the seismic capacity of the equipment identified in the Expedited Seismic Evaluation Process. If the seismic capacity of the equipment is inadequate relative to the reevaluated seismic demand, then the guidance provides equipment modification criteria. These modifications will provide additional assurance regarding maintenance of core and containment cooling during beyond-design-basis seismic events. In accordance with the guidance, licensees will submit the results of the evaluations, including required equipment modifications and their implementation schedule, in an Expedited Seismic Evaluation Process report for review by the NRC staff. The letter states that CEUS licensees will submit the reports resulting from the Expedited Seismic Evaluation Process by December 2014 and complete non-outage-related Expedited Seismic Evaluation Process equipment modifications by December 2016. Similarly, the letter states that the western United States (WUS) licensees will submit Expedited Seismic Evaluation Process reports by January 2016 and complete non-outage-related Expedited Seismic Evaluation Process equipment modifications by June 2018.

After review of industry's proposed EPRI Guidance, the NRC staff believes that the evaluations and potential near-term equipment modifications associated with the Expedited Seismic Evaluation Process will provide an important demonstration of seismic margin and enhance plant safety while more detailed plant risk evaluations are being conducted by licensees. The

¹⁰ The Order is available in ADAMS under Accession No. ML12054A736.

¹¹ The guidance is available in ADAMS under Accession No. ML12242A378.

staff further concludes that the EPRI Guidance provides an appropriate methodology for licensees to implement and complete the Expedited Seismic Evaluation Process according to the schedule provided in the letter.

In accordance with the 50.54(f) letter, each licensee is to submit to the NRC its intention to follow the NRC-endorsed seismic reevaluation guidance (or SPID), or an alternative approach, 60 days after the issuance of the NRC-endorsed guidance. Licensees may use the EPRI Guidance, in addition to the SPID guidance, as an acceptable approach for responding to the information requested in Enclosure 1 of the 50.54(f) letter. Accordingly, the NRC staff's issuance of this letter endorsing the EPRI Guidance is not considered backfitting, as defined in 10 CFR 50.109(a)(1).

The NRC requests that EPRI publish a final version of the EPRI Guidance within one month of receipt of this letter. The final version of the EPRI Guidance should incorporate this letter between the title page and the first section, and EPRI should remove the draft markings from the document.

Schedule Modification

As discussed above, the nuclear power industry has proposed two adjustments to the seismic hazard reevaluations at nuclear power plant sites: 1) to complete the update of the EPRI GMM for the CEUS, and 2) to implement the EPRI Guidance. These proposed changes affect the schedule outlined in the 50.54(f) letter.

First, the industry has requested additional time to complete the updated EPRI GMM project, including documentation and interactions with the NRC staff. The project documentation is scheduled to be submitted to the NRC on June 3, 2013. Pending approval by the staff, CEUS licensees will use the updated model to complete the site-specific seismic hazard evaluations specified in Enclosure 1 to the SPID guidance. Currently, the hazard submittals are requested by September 2013; however, the industry has requested to submit the hazard evaluations by March 31, 2014. The industry stated in its letter that it will not delay submittal of items 3.a. "Description of Subsurface Materials and Properties," and 3.b. "Development of Base Case Profiles and Nonlinear Material Properties" of Section 4 of Enclosure 1 to the SPID guidance. Licensees intend to submit these items in September 2013 for the staff's review. This will allow the staff to begin its review in accordance with the original schedule and complete a significant portion of the Section 4 review on time.

The staff finds that the schedule modifications discussed above for CEUS plants are acceptable because the updated GMM will provide the CEUS operating nuclear plant fleet with a model developed using the most recent data and methodologies available for their seismic hazard reevaluations. Additionally, the partial submittal in September 2013 will allow the staff to complete a portion of its review as originally scheduled by the 50.54(f) letter.

Second, the industry has requested modifications to the 50.54(f) letter schedule to allow for implementation of the Expedited Seismic Evaluation Process for those nuclear power plants where the reevaluated seismic hazard exceeds the plant's design basis. These schedule modifications allow for completion of the Expedited Seismic Evaluation Process for CEUS plants

by December 2016, if the equipment modifications do not require a plant shutdown to access equipment.¹² For WUS plants, the Expedited Seismic Evaluation Process modifications will be completed by June 2018, if the modifications do not require a plant shutdown to access equipment.

For plants requiring a seismic risk analysis, the 50.54(f) letter states that the staff will perform a prioritization for both the CEUS and WUS plants into two priority groups, and possibly a third, if needed. Under industry's proposed schedule, the higher priority CEUS plants will complete their risk evaluations by June 2017 (originally scheduled for October 2016). This delay is primarily due to the additional time needed to complete the EPRI GMM update project. The second group of CEUS plants will complete their risk evaluations by December 2019. This is about a two-year delay from the schedule specified in the 50.54(f) letter for the lower priority plants to complete their risk evaluations. Conversely, the letter proposes an earlier completion date of June 2017 for the risk evaluations for the higher priority WUS plants.

The staff finds that the schedule modifications discussed above for CEUS and WUS plants are acceptable, because the Expedited Seismic Evaluation Process provides for near-term seismic evaluations and expedited equipment modifications at the plants that will offer additional assurance that plants will operate safely during a beyond-design-basis seismic event. Furthermore, the schedule modifications account for limited seismic resources available to both the NRC and the industry. The schedule modifications provide for completion of the higher priority CEUS plant risk evaluations by the end of June 2017, which is not a significant extension of the original 50.54(f) letter schedule of October 2016. In addition, the schedule proposes an earlier completion date for the higher priority risk evaluations for the WUS plants.

The industry noted in its letter that if a large number of plants need to perform the risk evaluations, additional time may be needed which may extend the completion of some risk evaluations for a third tier of lower priority plants until December 2020. The NRC staff finds that the additional time to complete these lower priority plant risk evaluations is acceptable because limited seismic resources will likely impact the number of risk evaluations that can be completed by 2019.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the staff has determined that the proposed EPRI Guidance and the schedule modifications described in the NEI's April 9, 2013, letter are acceptable since they provide for implementation of the expedited interim actions and near-term plant safety enhancements, as well as EPRI's completion of the update to the GMM for the CEUS. The industry proposal also provides a reasonable approach and schedule which accounts for the considerable seismic resources needed to complete the seismic reevaluations.

¹² If outages are required, the plants are allowed two outages from the completion of the Expedited Seismic Evaluation Process report, which are to be submitted to the NRC staff for review by December 31, 2014.

J. Pollock

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If you or your staff have additional questions, please contact my office; alternatively, you can contact Mrs. Lisa Regner of my staff by phone at 301-415-1906, or by e-mail at Lisa.Regner@nrc.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric J. Leeds". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "E" and "L".

Eric J. Leeds, Director
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Enclosure:
Federal Register Notice

cc: See enclosed list
Listserv

POWER REACTOR LICENSEES AND HOLDERS OF
CONSTRUCTION PERMITS IN ACTIVE OR DEFERRED STATUS

Arkansas Nuclear One

Entergy Operations, Inc.
Docket Nos. 50-313 and 50-368
License Nos. DPR-51 and NPF-6

Mr. Jeremy Browning
Site Vice President
Entergy Operations, Inc.
Arkansas Nuclear One
1448 S.R. 333
Russellville, AR 72802

Beaver Valley Power Station

First Energy Nuclear Operating Co.
Docket Nos. 50-334 and 50-412
License Nos. DPR-66 and NPF-73

Mr. Eric A. Larson
Beaver Valley Power Station
P.O. Box 4, Route 168
Shippingport, PA 15077

Bellefonte Nuclear Power Station

Tennessee Valley Authority
Docket Nos. 50-438 and 50-439
Construction Permit Nos. CPPR-122 and
CPPR-123

Mr. Michael D. Skaggs
Senior Vice President, Nuclear Construction
Tennessee Valley Authority
6A Lookout Place
1101 Market Street
Chattanooga, TN 37402-2801

Braidwood Station

Exelon Generation Co., LLC
Docket Nos. STN 50-456 and STN 50-457
License Nos. NPF-72 and NPF-77

Mr. Michael J. Pacillio
Senior Vice President
Exelon Generation Company, LLC
President and Chief Nuclear Office (CNO)
Exelon Nuclear
4300 Winfield Road
Warrenville, IL 60555

Browns Ferry Nuclear Plant

Tennessee Valley Authority
Docket Nos. 50-259, 50-260 and 50-296
License Nos. DPR-33, DPR-52 and DPR-68

Mr. Joseph W. Shea
Vice President, Nuclear Licensing
Tennessee Valley Authority
1101 Market Street, EB 9W
Chattanooga, TN 37402-2801

Brunswick Steam Electric Plant

Carolina Power & Light Co.
Docket Nos. 50-325 and 50-324
License Nos. DPR-71 and DPR-62

Mr. Michael J. Annacone
Vice President
Carolina Power & Light Company
Brunswick Steam Electric Plant
P.O. Box 10429
Southport, NC 28461

Byron Station

Exelon Generation Co., LLC
Docket Nos. STN 50-454 and STN 50-455
License Nos. NPF-37 and NPF-66

Mr. Michael J. Pacillio
Senior Vice President
Exelon Generation Company, LLC
President and Chief Nuclear Office (CNO)
Exelon Nuclear
4300 Winfield Road
Warrenville, IL 60555

Callaway Plant

Union Electric Company
Docket No. 50-483
License No. NPF-30

Mr. Adam C. Heflin
Senior Vice President and
Chief Nuclear Officer
Union Electric Company
Ameren Missouri
P.O. Box 620
Fulton, MO 65251

Calvert Cliffs Nuclear Power Plant

Calvert Cliffs Nuclear Power Plant, LLC
Docket Nos. 50-317 and 50-318
License Nos. DPR-53 and DPR-69

Mr. George H. Gellrich
Vice President
Calvert Cliffs Nuclear Power Plant, LLC
Calvert Cliffs Nuclear Power Plant
1650 Calvert Cliffs Parkway
Lusby, MD 20657-4702

Catawba Nuclear Station

Duke Energy Carolinas, LLC
Docket Nos. 50-413 and 50-414
License Nos. NPF-35 and NPF-52

Mr. Kelvin Henderson
Site Vice President
Duke Energy Carolinas, LLC
Catawba Nuclear Station
4800 Concord Road
York, SC 29745

Clinton Power Station

Exelon Generation Co., LLC
Docket No. 50-461
License No. NPF-62

Mr. Michael J. Pacilio
President and Chief Nuclear Officer
Exelon Nuclear
Clinton Power Station
4300 Winfield Road
Warrenville, IL 60555

Columbia Generating Station

Energy Northwest
Docket No. 50-397
License No. NPF-21

Mr. Mark E. Reddemann
Chief Executive Officer
Energy Northwest
MD 1023
North Power Plant Loop
P.O. Box 968
Richland, WA 99352

Comanche Peak Nuclear Power Plant
Luminant Generation Co., LLC
Docket Nos. 50-445 and 50-446
License Nos. NPF-87 and NPF-89

Mr. Rafael Flores
Senior Vice President and
Chief Nuclear Officer
Attn: Regulatory Affairs
Luminant Generation Company, LLC
P.O. Box 1002
Glen Rose, TX 76043

Cooper Nuclear Station
Nebraska Public Power District
Docket No. 50-298
License No. DPR-46

Mr. Oscar A. Limpas
Vice President Nuclear and
Chief Nuclear Officer
Nebraska Public Power District
72676 648A Avenue
P.O. Box 98
Brownville, NE 68321

Crystal River Nuclear Generating Plant
Florida Power Corp.
Docket No. 50-302
License No. DPR-72

Terry Hobbs
Decommissioning Director
Crystal River Nuclear Plant (NA2C)
15760 West Power Line Street
Crystal River, FL 34428-6708

Davis-Besse Nuclear Power Station
First Energy Nuclear Operating Co.
Docket No. 50-346
License No. NPF-3

Mr. Ray Lieb
Site Vice President
FirstEnergy Nuclear Operating Company
c/o Davis-Besse NPS
5501 N. State Route 2
Oak Harbor, OH 43449-9760

Diablo Canyon Power Plant
Pacific Gas & Electric Co.
Docket Nos. 50-275 and 50-323
License Nos. DPR-80 and DPR-82

Mr. Edward D. Halpin
Senior Vice President and
Chief Nuclear Officer
Pacific Gas and Electric Company
P.O. Box 56,
Mail Code 104/6
Avila Beach, CA 93424

Donald C. Cook Nuclear Plant
Indiana Michigan Power Company
Docket Nos. 50-315 and 50-316
License Nos. DPR-58 and DPR-74

Mr. Lawrence J. Weber
Senior Vice President and
Chief Nuclear Officer
Indiana Michigan Power Company
Nuclear Generation Group
One Cook Place
Bridgman, MI 49106

Dresden Nuclear Power Station
Exelon Generation Co., LLC
Docket Nos. 50-237 and 50-249
License Nos. DPR-19 and DPR-25

Mr. Michael J. Pacillio
Senior Vice President
Exelon Generation Company, LLC
President and Chief Nuclear Office (CNO)
Exelon Nuclear
4300 Winfield Road
Warrenville, IL 60555

Duane Arnold Energy Center
NextEra Energy Duane Arnold, LLC
Docket No. 50-331
License No. DPR-49

Mr. Rich Anderson
Site Vice President
NextEra Energy
Duane Arnold Energy Center
3277 DAEC Road
Palo, IA 52324-9785

Edwin I. Hatch Nuclear Plant
Southern Nuclear Operating Co.
Docket Nos. 50-321 and 50-366
License Nos. DPR-57 and NPF-5

Mr. C.R. Pierce
Regulatory Affairs Director
Southern Nuclear Operating Co., Inc.
P.O. Box 1295/BIN B038
Birmingham, AL 35201-1295

Fermi
Detroit Edison Co.
Docket No. 50-341
License No. NPF-43

Mr. Joseph H. Plona
Senior Vice President and Chief Nuclear
Officer
Detroit Edison Company
Fermi 2 – 210 NOC
6400 North Dixie Highway
Newport, MI 48166

Fort Calhoun Station
Omaha Public Power District
Docket No. 50-285
License No. DPR-40

Mr. Louis Cortopassi
Vice President and Chief Nuclear Officer
Omaha Public Power District
Fort Calhoun Station
Mail Stop FC-2-4
9610 Power Lane
Blair, NE 68008

Grand Gulf Nuclear Station
Entergy Operations, Inc.
Docket No. 50-416
License No. NPF-29

Vice President, Operations
Entergy Operations, Inc.
Grand Gulf Nuclear Station
P.O. Box 756
Port Gibson, MS 39150

H. B. Robinson Steam Electric Plant
Carolina Power & Light Co.
Docket No. 50-261
License No. DPR-23

Mr. William R. Gideon
Vice President
H.B. Robinson Steam Electric Plant
Carolina Power & Light Company
3581 West Entrance Road
Hartsville, SC 29550

Hope Creek Generating Station
PSEG Nuclear, LLC
Docket No. 50-354
License No. NPF-57

Mr. Thomas Joyce
President and Chief Nuclear Officer
PSEG Nuclear LLC - N09
P.O. Box 236,
Hancocks Bridge, NJ 08038

Indian Point Energy Center
Entergy Nuclear Operations, Inc.
Docket Nos. 50-247 and 50-286
License Nos. DPR-26 and DPR-64

Vice President, Operations
Entergy Nuclear Operations, Inc.
Indian Point Energy Center
450 Broadway, GSB
P.O. Box 249
Buchanan, NY 10511-0249

James A. FitzPatrick Nuclear Power Plant
Entergy Nuclear Operations, Inc.
Docket No. 50-333
License No. DPR-59

Site Vice President
Entergy Nuclear Operations, Inc.
James A. FitzPatrick Nuclear Power Plant
P.O. Box 110
Lycoming, NY 13093

Joseph M. Farley Nuclear Plant
Southern Nuclear Operating Co.
Docket Nos. 50-348 and 50-364
License Nos. NPF-2 and NPF-8

Mr. C.R. Pierce
Regulatory Affairs Director
Southern Nuclear Operating Co., Inc.
P.O. Box 1295/Bin 038
Birmingham, AL 35201-1295

Kewaunee Power Station
Dominion Energy Kewaunee, Inc.
Docket No. 50-305
License No. DPR-43

Mr. David A. Heacock
President and Chief Nuclear Officer
Dominion Energy Kewaunee, Inc.
Innsbrook Technical Center
5000 Dominion Boulevard
Glen Allen, VA 23060-6711

LaSalle County Station
Exelon Generation Co., LLC
Docket Nos. 50-373 and 50-374
License Nos. NPF-11 and NPF-18

Mr. Michael J. Pacillio
Senior Vice President
Exelon Generation Company, LLC
President and Chief Nuclear Office (CNO)
Exelon Nuclear
4300 Winfield Road
Warrenville, IL 60555

Limerick Generating Station
Exelon Generation Co., LLC
Docket Nos. 50-352 and 50-353
License Nos. NPF-39 and NPF-85

Mr. Michael J. Pacillio
Senior Vice President
Exelon Generation Company, LLC
President and Chief Nuclear Office (CNO)
Exelon Nuclear
4300 Winfield Road
Warrenville, IL 60555

Millstone Nuclear Power Station
Dominion Nuclear Connecticut, Inc.
Docket Nos. 50-336 and 50-423
License Nos. DPR-65 and NPF-49

Mr. David A. Heacock
President and Chief Nuclear Officer
Dominion Nuclear Connecticut, Inc.
Innsbrook Technical Center
5000 Dominion Boulevard
Glen Allen, VA 23060-6711

Monticello Nuclear Generating Plant
Northern States Power Company
Docket No. 50-263
License No. DPR-22

Mr. Mark A. Schimmel
Site Vice President
Northern States Power Company - Minnesota
Monticello Nuclear Generating Plant
2807 West County Road 75
Monticello, MN 55362-9637

Nine Mile Point Nuclear Station
Nine Mile Point Nuclear Station, LLC
Docket Nos. 50-220 and 50-410
License Nos. DPR-63 and NPF-69

Mr. Christopher Costanzo
Vice President Nine Mile Point
Nine Mile Point Nuclear Station, LLC
P.O. Box 63
Lycoming, NY 13093

North Anna Power Station
Virginia Electric & Power Co.
Docket Nos. 50-338 and 50-339
License Nos. NPF-4 and NPF-7

Mr. David A. Heacock
President and Chief Nuclear Officer
Dominion Nuclear
Innsbrook Technical Center
5000 Dominion Boulevard
Glen Allen, VA 23060-6711

Oconee Nuclear Station
Duke Energy Carolinas, LLC
Docket Nos. 50-269, 50-270 and 50-287
License Nos. DPR-38, DPR-47 and DPR-55

Mr. Scott Batson
Vice President, Oconee Nuclear Station
Duke Energy Carolinas, LLC
7800 Rochester Highway
Seneca, SC 29672

Oyster Creek Nuclear Generating Station
Exelon Generation Co., LLC
Docket No. 50-219
License No. DPR-16

Mr. Michael J. Pacillio
Senior Vice President
Exelon Generation Company, LLC
President and Chief Nuclear Office (CNO)
Exelon Nuclear
4300 Winfield Road
Warrenville, IL 60555

Palisades Nuclear Plant
Entergy Nuclear Operations, Inc.
Docket No. 50-255
License No. DPR-20

Vice President, Operations
Entergy Nuclear Operations, Inc.
Palisades Nuclear Plant
27780 Blue Star Memorial Highway
Covert, MI 49043

Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station
Arizona Public Service Company
Docket Nos. STN 50-528, STN 50-529 and
STN 50-530
License Nos. NPF-41, NPF-51 and NPF-74

Mr. Randall K. Edington
Executive Vice President Nuclear and Chief
Nuclear Officer
Arizona Public Service Co.
P.O. Box 52034, MS 7602
Phoenix, AZ 85072-2034

Peach Bottom Atomic Power Station
Exelon Generation Co., LLC
Docket Nos. 50-277 and 50-278
License Nos. DPR-44 and DPR-56

Mr. Michael J. Pacillio
Senior Vice President
Exelon Generation Company, LLC
President and Chief Nuclear Office (CNO)
Exelon Nuclear
4300 Winfield Road
Warrenville, IL 60555

Perry Nuclear Power Plant
FirstEnergy Nuclear Operating Co.
Docket No. 50-440
License No. NPF-58

Mr. Vito A. Kaminskis
Site Vice President - Nuclear - Perry
FirstEnergy Nuclear Operating Company
Perry Nuclear Power Plant
10 Center Road, A290
Perry, OH 44081

Pilgrim Nuclear Power Station Unit No. 1
Entergy Nuclear Operations, Inc.
Docket No. 50-293
License No. DPR-35

Mr. John Dent, Jr.
Vice President and Site Vice President
Entergy Nuclear Operations, Inc.
Pilgrim Nuclear Power Station
600 Rocky Hill Road
Plymouth, MA 02360-5508

Point Beach Nuclear Plant
NextEra Energy Point Beach, LLC
Docket Nos. 50-266 and 50-301
License Nos. DPR-24 and DPR-27

Mr. Larry Meyer
Site Vice President
NextEra Energy Point Beach, LLC
Point Beach Nuclear Plant, Units 1 & 2
6610 Nuclear Road
Two Rivers, WI 54241-9516

Prairie Island Nuclear Generating Plant
Northern States Power Co. Minnesota
Docket Nos. 50-282 and 50-306
License Nos. DPR-42 and DPR-60

Mr. James E. Lynch
Site Vice President
Northern States Power Company - Minnesota
Prairie Island Nuclear Generating Plant
1717 Wakonade Drive East
Welch, MN 55089-9642

Quad Cities Nuclear Power Station
Exelon Generation Co., LLC
Docket Nos. 50-254 and 50-265
License Nos. DPR-29 and DPR-30

Mr. Michael J. Pacillio
Senior Vice President
Exelon Generation Company, LLC
President and Chief Nuclear Office (CNO)
Exelon Nuclear
4300 Winfield Road
Warrenville, IL 60555

R. E. Ginna Nuclear Power Plant
R.E. Ginna Nuclear Power Plant, LLC
Docket No. 50-244
License No. DPR-18

Mr. Joseph E. Pacher
Vice President
R.E. Ginna Nuclear Power Plant, LLC
R.E. Ginna Nuclear Power Plant
1503 Lake Road
Ontario, NY 14519

River Bend Station
Entergy Operations, Inc.
Docket No. 50-458
License No. NPF-47

Vice President, Operations
Entergy Operations, Inc.
River Bend Station
5485 U.S. Highway 61N
St. Francisville, LA 70775

Salem Nuclear Generating Station
PSEG Nuclear, LLC.
Docket Nos. 50-272 & 50-311
License Nos. DPR-70 and DPR-75

Mr. Thomas Joyce
President and Chief Nuclear Officer
PSEG Nuclear LLC - N09
P.O. Box 236,
Hancocks Bridge, NJ 08038

San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station
Southern California Edison Company
Docket Nos. 50-361 and 50-362
License Nos. NFP-10 and NFP-15

Mr. Peter T. Dietrich
Senior Vice President and
Chief Nuclear Officer
Southern California Edison Company
San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station
P.O. Box 128
San Clemente, CA 92674-0128

Seabrook Nuclear Plant
NextEra Energy Seabrook, LLC
Docket No 50-443
License No. NFP-86

Mr. Kevin Walsh
Vice President, Seabrook Nuclear Plant
c/o Mr. Michael O'Keefe
NextEra Energy Seabrook, LLC
P.O. Box 300
Seabrook, NH 03874

Sequoyah Nuclear Plant
Tennessee Valley Authority
Docket Nos. 50-327 and 50-328
License Nos. DPR-77 and DPR-79

Mr. Joseph W. Shea
Vice President, Nuclear Licensing
Tennessee Valley Authority
1101 Market Street, LP 3D-C
Chattanooga, TN 37402-2801

Shearon Harris Nuclear Power Plant
Carolina Power & Light Co.
Docket No. 50-400
License No. NPF-63

Mr. George T. Hamrick
Vice President
Carolina Power and Light Company
Shearon Harris Nuclear Power Plant
P.O. Box 165, Mail Zone 1
New Hill, NC 27562-0165

South Texas Project
STP Nuclear Operating Co.
Docket Nos. 50-498 and 50-499
License Nos. NPF-76 and NPF-80

Mr. Dennis L. Koehl
President and CEO/CNO
STP Nuclear Operating Company
South Texas Project Electric Generating
Station
P.O. Box 289
Wadsworth, TX 77483

St. Lucie Plant
Florida Power & Light Co.
Docket Nos. 50-335 and 50-389
License Nos. DPR-67 and NPF-16

Mr. Mano Nazar
Executive Vice President and
Chief Nuclear Officer
NextEra Energy
P.O. Box 14000
700 Universe Boulevard
Juno Beach, FL 33408-0420

Surry Power Station
Virginia Electric & Power Co.
Docket Nos. 50-280 and 50-281
License Nos. DPR-32 and DPR-37

Mr. David A. Heacock
President and Chief Nuclear Officer
Dominion Nuclear
Virginia Electric & Power Company
Innsbrook Technical Center
5000 Dominion Boulevard
Glen Allen, VA 23060-6711

Susquehanna Steam Electric Station
PPL Susquehanna, LLC
Docket Nos. 50-387 and 50-388
License Nos. NPF-14 and NPF-22

Mr. Timothy S. Rausch
Senior Vice President and
Chief Nuclear Officer
PPL Susquehanna, LLC
769 Salem Boulevard
NUCSB3
Berwick, PA 18603-0467

Three Mile Island, Unit 1

Exelon Nuclear
Docket No. 50-289
License No. DPR-50

Mr. Michael J. Pacillio
Senior Vice President
Exelon Generation Company, LLC
President and Chief Nuclear Office (CNO)
Exelon Nuclear
4300 Winfield Road
Warrenville, IL 60555

Turkey Point

Florida Power & Light Co.
Docket Nos. 50-250 and 50-251
License Nos. DPR-31 and DPR-41

Mr. Mano Nazar
Executive Vice President and
Chief Nuclear Officer
NextEra Energy
P.O. Box 14000
700 Universe Boulevard
Juno Beach, FL 33408-0420

Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Station

Entergy Nuclear Operations, Inc.
Docket No. 50-271
License No. DPR-28

Site Vice President, Operations
Entergy Nuclear Operations, Inc.
Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Station
P.O. Box 250, Governor Hunt Road
Vernon, VT 05354

Virgil C. Summer Nuclear Station

South Carolina Electric & Gas Co.
Docket No. 50-395
License No. NPF-12

Mr. Thomas D. Gatlin
Vice President Nuclear Operations
South Carolina Electric & Gas Company
Virgil C. Summer Nuclear Station
Post Office Box 88, Mail Code 800
Jenkinsville, SC 29065

Vogtle Electric Generating Plant
Southern Nuclear Operating Co.
Docket Nos. 50-424 and 50-425
License Nos. NPF-68 and NPF-81

Mr. C.R. Pierce
Regulatory Affairs Director
Southern Nuclear Operating Co., Inc.
P.O. Box 1295/Bin 038
Birmingham, AL 35201

Waterford Steam Electric Station

Entergy Operations, Inc.
Docket No. 50-382
License No. NPF-38

Vice President, Operations
Entergy Operations, Inc.
Waterford Steam Electric Station, Unit 3
17265 River Road
Killona, LA 70057-0751

Watts Bar Nuclear Plant, Units 1 and 2

Watts Bar Nuclear Plant, Unit 1
Tennessee Valley Authority
Docket No. 50-390
License No. NPF-90

Watts Bar Nuclear Plant, Unit 2
Tennessee Valley Authority
Docket No. 50-391
Construction Permit No. CPPR No. 092

Mr. Joseph W. Shea
Chief Nuclear Officer and Executive Vice
President
Tennessee Valley Authority
1101 Market Street
Chattanooga, TN 37402-2801

William B. McGuire Nuclear Station
Duke Energy Carolinas, LLC
Docket Nos. 50-369 and 50-370
License Nos. NPF-9 and NPF-17

Mr. Steven D. Capps
Duke Energy Carolinas, LLC
McGuire Nuclear Station
12700 Hagers Ferry Road
Huntersville, NC 28078-8985

Wolf Creek Generating Station
Wolf Creek Nuclear Operating Corp.
Docket No. 50-482
License No. NPF-42

Mr. Matthew W. Sunseri
President and Chief Executive Officer
Wolf Creek Nuclear Operating Corporation
P.O. Box 411
Burlington, KS 66839

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[NRC-2013-0038]

Electric Power Research Institute; Seismic Evaluation Guidance

AGENCY: U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

ACTION: Endorsement letter; issuance.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is issuing an endorsement letter of Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI) Report, "Seismic Evaluation Guidance: EPRI Guidance for the Resolution of Fukushima Near-Term Task Force Recommendation 2.1: Seismic," Draft Report, hereafter referred to as the EPRI Guidance. This EPRI Guidance provides additional information, to be used in combination with the staff-endorsed Screening Prioritization and Implementation Details (SPID) report¹, on an acceptable strategy to implement interim actions in accordance with item (6) of the Requested Information in Enclosure 1 "Recommendation 2.1: Seismic," of the NRC staff's request for information (50.54(f) letter), "Request for Information Pursuant to Title 10 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (10 CFR), Part 50.54(f) Regarding Recommendations 2.1, 2.3, and 9.3, of the Near-Term Task Force Review of Insights from the Fukushima Dai-ichi Accident," dated March 12, 2012. In addition, in its April 9, 2013 letter², the Nuclear Energy Institute (NEI) requested modifications to the schedule

¹ The SPID report is available in the NRC's Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS) under Accession No. ML12333A170. The staff endorsement letter for the SPID report is available in ADAMS under Accession No. ML12319A074.

² The NEI letter, with attachments, is available in ADAMS in a package with Accession No. ML13101A345.

established in the staff's 50.54(f) letter. The NRC staff has found the schedule modifications to be acceptable since they account for completion of the EPRI central and eastern United States (CEUS) ground motion model (GMM) update, completion of potential interim actions provided in the EPRI Guidance, and limited available seismic resources.

ADDRESSES: You may access information related to this document, which the NRC possesses and is publicly available, by searching on <http://www.regulations.gov> under Docket ID **NRC-2013-0038**.

- **Federal Rulemaking Web site:** Go to <http://www.regulations.gov> and search for Docket ID **NRC-2013-0038**. Address questions about NRC dockets to Carol Gallagher; telephone: 301-492-3668; e-mail: Carol.Gallagher@nrc.gov.

- **NRC's Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS):**
You may access publicly-available documents online in the NRC Library at <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html>. To begin the search, select "[ADAMS Public Documents](#)" and then select "[Begin Web-based ADAMS Search](#)." For problems with ADAMS, please contact the NRC's Public Document Room (PDR) reference staff at 1-800-397-4209, 301-415-4737, or by e-mail to PDR.Resources@nrc.gov. The NRC staff's endorsement letter of the EPRI Guidance is available under ADAMS Accession No. ML13106A331. The NRC staff's request for information dated March 12, 2012, is available under ADAMS Accession No. ML12053A340.

- **NRC's PDR:** You may examine and purchase copies of public documents at the NRC's PDR, Room O1-F21, One White Flint North, 11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland 20852.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ms. Lisa M. Regner, Japan Lessons-Learned Project Directorate, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001; telephone: 301-415-1906; e-mail: Lisa.Regner@nrc.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Background Information

Pursuant to 10 CFR Part 50.54(f), the NRC issued a 50.54(f) letter dated March 12, 2012, regarding Recommendations 2.1, 2.3, and 9.3, of the Near-Term Task Force (NTTF) Review of Insights from the Fukushima Dai-ichi Accident.³ The NRC issued the 50.54(f) letter following the staff's evaluation of the earthquake and tsunami, and resulting nuclear accident, at the Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear power plant in March 2011. Enclosure 1 to the 50.54(f) letter requests licensees and holders of construction permits under 10 CFR Part 50, "Domestic Licensing of Production and Utilization Facilities," to reevaluate the seismic hazards at their sites using present-day NRC requirements and guidance, and to identify actions taken or planned to address plant-specific vulnerabilities associated with the updated seismic hazards. Based on this information, the NRC staff will determine if additional regulatory actions are necessary to protect against the updated hazards.

By letter dated February 15, 2013, the NRC staff issued an endorsement letter, with clarifications, of EPRI-1025287, "Seismic Evaluation Guidance: Screening, Prioritization, and Implementation Details (SPID) for the Resolution of Fukushima Near-Term Task Force Recommendation 2.1: Seismic," referred to as the SPID report. This SPID report describes

³ The NTTF Report is available under ADAMS Accession No. ML111861807. The 50.54(f) letter is available under ADAMS Accession No. ML12053A340.

strategies for the screening, prioritization, and implementation of seismic risk evaluations that are acceptable to the NRC staff, and will assist nuclear power reactor licensees when responding to Enclosure 1 of the 50.54(f) letter.

By letter dated April 9, 2013, the NEI submitted additional guidance to be used to supplement the SPID report for NRC endorsement. The letter also documented the industry's proposed plan to update the GMM for CEUS plants, and proposed modifications to the schedule for plant seismic reevaluations established in the 50.54(f) letter. The NEI letter, the EPRI Guidance, and additional attachments addressing proposed schedule changes are available in ADAMS under package Accession No. ML13101A345.

II. Ground Motion Model

The 50.54(f) letter requested that the licensees whose plants are located in the CEUS use NUREG-2115, "Central and Eastern United States [CEUS] Seismic Source Characterization for Nuclear Facilities" and the appropriate EPRI (2004, 2006) GMM to characterize the seismic hazard for their sites. The industry is currently completing a study to update the EPRI (2004, 2006) GMM based on current data and new ground motion prediction equations developed by seismic experts.

The NRC staff has interacted with NEI, EPRI, and other stakeholders in public meetings since November 2012, for status updates on industry's efforts to update the CEUS GMM. By letter dated January 31, 2013, the NEI transmitted the EPRI draft document, "Draft – EPRI (2004, 2006) Ground Motion Model (GMM) Review Project" to the NRC, requesting review and approval by February 27, 2013. For the update of its earlier GMM, EPRI used a significant amount of additional data, conducted field investigations, and used more recent methods than were previously available. In performing the GMM update, EPRI has also addressed the

concerns of an independent peer review panel, which is an important part of the Senior Seismic Hazard Analysis Committee (SSHAC) guidelines (these guidelines are discussed in NRC's NUREG 2117, "Practical Implementation Guidelines for SSHAC Level 3 and 4 Hazard Studies"). Following a review of the NEI submittal, in a public meeting on February 28, 2013, the staff expressed concern with EPRI's treatment of uncertainty and the level of documentation in the proposed updated GMM. The staff formally documented these concerns by letter dated March 20, 2013.

Subsequently, in a public meeting on March 26, 2013, industry presented a revision of its updated EPRI GMM, which demonstrated significant progress toward addressing the staff's concerns with respect to the treatment of uncertainty. Industry also proposed a schedule, including further interactions with NRC staff, for completing the development and documentation of the updated EPRI GMM. In order to complete its update of the EPRI GMM and accompanying documentation, and to allow time for the development of site-specific seismic hazard curves, industry proposed a 6 month delay from the schedule outlined in the 50.54(f) letter for the submittal of the seismic hazard reevaluations for CEUS plants.

The staff agrees that updated models, methods, and data will provide licensees with the most current information in order to perform the seismic hazard evaluations requested by the 50.54(f) letter.

III. EPRI Guidance

The EPRI Guidance document provides licensees with information on the performance of an Expedited Seismic Evaluation Process. The Expedited Seismic Evaluation Process is a screening, evaluation, and equipment modification process to be conducted by licensees to

provide additional seismic margin and expedite plant safety enhancements while more detailed and comprehensive plant seismic risk evaluations are being performed.

The Expedited Seismic Evaluation Process evaluations would be conducted on plants with a new seismic hazard that exceeds their current seismic design basis, and necessary modifications would be made to certain core and containment cooling components used during the initial plant coping time following a severe external event. The letter states that CEUS licensees will complete non-outage-related Expedited Seismic Evaluation Process equipment modifications by December 2016. Western United States (WUS) licensees will complete non-outage-related Expedited Seismic Evaluation Process equipment modifications by June 2018.

After review of industry's proposed EPRI Guidance, the NRC staff believes that the evaluations and potential near-term equipment modifications associated with the Expedited Seismic Evaluation Process will provide an important demonstration of seismic margin and enhance plant safety while more detailed plant risk evaluations are being conducted by licensees. The staff further concludes that the seismic evaluation guidance for the EPRI Guidance provides an appropriate methodology for licensees to implement and complete the Expedited Seismic Evaluation Process according to the schedule provided in the letter.

IV. Schedule Modifications

The NEI has proposed two adjustments to the seismic hazard reevaluations at nuclear power plant sites: (1) to complete the update of the EPRI GMM for the CEUS, and (2) to implement the EPRI Guidance. These proposed changes affect the schedule outlined in the 50.54(f) letter.

First, the industry has requested additional time to complete the updated EPRI GMM project, including documentation and interactions with the NRC staff. The project

documentation is scheduled to be submitted to the NRC on June 3, 2013. Pending approval by the staff, the CEUS licensees will use the updated model to complete the site-specific seismic hazard reevaluations specified in Enclosure 1 to the SPID guidance. Currently, the hazard submittals are requested by September 2013; however, industry has requested to submit the hazard evaluations by March 31, 2014. The industry stated in its letter that it will not delay submittal of items 3.a. "Description of Subsurface Materials and Properties," and 3.b. "Development of Base Case Profiles and Nonlinear Material Properties" of Section 4 of Enclosure 1 to the SPID guidance. Licensees intend to submit these items in September 2013 for the staff's review. This will allow the staff to begin its review in accordance with the original schedule and complete a significant portion of the Section 4 review on time.

The staff finds that the schedule modifications discussed above for CEUS plants are acceptable because the updated GMM will provide the CEUS operating nuclear plant fleet with a model developed using the most recent data and methodologies available for their seismic hazard reevaluations. Additionally, the partial submittal in September 2013 will allow the staff to complete a portion of its CEUS review as originally scheduled by the 50.54(f) letter.

Second, the industry has requested modifications to the 50.54(f) letter schedule to allow for implementation of the EPRI Guidance interim actions for those nuclear power plants where the reevaluated seismic hazard exceeds the plant's design basis. These schedule modifications allow for completion of Expedited Seismic Evaluation Process for CEUS plants by December 2016, if the modifications do not require a plant shutdown to access equipment. For WUS plants, the Expedited Seismic Evaluation Process modifications will be completed by June 2018, if the modifications do not require a plant shutdown to access equipment.

For plants requiring a seismic risk analysis (i.e., those with a reevaluated seismic hazard that exceeds the current seismic design basis), the 50.54(f) letter states that the staff will perform a prioritization for both the CEUS and WUS plants into two priority groups, and possibly

a third, if needed. Under industry's proposed schedule, the higher priority CEUS plants will complete their risk evaluations by June 2017 (originally scheduled for October 2016). This delay is primarily due to the additional time needed to complete the EPRI GMM update project. The second group of CEUS plants will complete their risk evaluations by December 2019. This is about a two-year delay from the schedule specified in the 50.54(f) letter for the lower priority plants to complete their risk evaluations. Conversely, the letter proposes an earlier completion date of June 2017 for the risk evaluations for the higher priority WUS plants.

The staff finds that the schedule modifications discussed above for CEUS and WUS nuclear power plants are acceptable, since the Expedited Seismic Evaluation Process provides for near-term seismic evaluations and expedited equipment modifications at the plants that will offer additional assurance that plants will operate safely during a beyond design basis seismic event. Furthermore, the schedule modifications account for limited seismic resources available to both the NRC and the industry. The schedule modifications provide for completion of the higher priority CEUS plant risk evaluations by the end of June 2017, which is not a significant extension of the original 50.54(f) letter schedule of October 2016. In addition, the schedule proposes an earlier completion date for the higher priority risk evaluations for the WUS plants.

V. Basis for Endorsement

The NRC staff interacted with the stakeholders on development of the EPRI Guidance report with a focus on guidance on potential interim actions to be implemented for plants where the reevaluated seismic hazard exceeds the current seismic design basis. The EPRI Guidance report is the product of considerable interaction between the NRC, NEI, EPRI, and other

stakeholders at five public meetings⁴ over a 5-month period. These interactions and the insights gained from the meetings allowed for the development of this document in a very short time frame. The meetings helped develop the expectations for how licensees would perform potential interim actions after updating their seismic hazard information. At each meeting, the NRC staff provided its comments on the current version of the EPRI Guidance and discussed with stakeholders subsequent proposed revisions to the document. This iterative process, over several months, resulted in the final version of the document. The NRC staff's endorsement of the EPRI Guidance is based on this cumulative development process resulting from the interactions between stakeholders and the NRC staff. This is the same process employed successfully in the development of the SPID guidance.

The staff has determined that the EPRI Guidance will provide an important demonstration of seismic margin and enhanced plant safety through evaluations and potential near-term modifications of certain core and containment cooling equipment while more comprehensive plant seismic risk evaluations are being performed. The NRC staff also has determined that the schedule modifications provided in the NEI's April 9, 2013, letter are acceptable because the schedule accounts for seismic resource limitations, EPRI's completion of the update to the GMM for the CEUS, and implementation of the EPRI Guidance evaluations and actions.

VI. Backfitting and Issue Finality

This endorsement letter does not constitute backfitting as defined in 10 CFR 50.109, "Backfitting" (the Backfit Rule). This endorsement letter provides additional guidance on an

⁴ Public meetings were held on November 2 and 14 and December 13, 2012; and February 14 and March 26, 2013.

acceptable method for implementing the interim actions described in item (6) of the Requested Information in Enclosure 1, "Recommendation 2.1: Seismic," of the 50.54(f) letter. Licensees and construction permit holders may voluntarily use the guidance in the EPRI Guidance to comply with the requested interim action portion of the 50.54(f) letter. Methods, analyses, or solutions that differ from those described in the EPRI Guidance report may be deemed acceptable if they provide sufficient basis and information for the NRC staff to verify that the proposed alternative is acceptable.

VII. Congressional Review Act

This endorsement letter is a rule as designated in the Congressional Review Act (5 U.S.C. 801-808). The Office of Management and Budget has found that this is a major rule in accordance with the Congressional Review Act.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 7th day of May 2013.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission



Eric J. Leeds, Director
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

J. Pollock

- 6 -

If you or your staff have additional questions, please contact my office; alternatively, you can contact Mrs. Lisa Regner of my staff by phone at 301-415-1906, or by e-mail at Lisa.Regner@nrc.gov.

Sincerely,

/ra/

Eric J. Leeds, Director
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

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Letter to Joseph E. Pollock from Eric J. Leeds dated May 7, 2013

SUBJECT: ELECTRIC POWER RESEARCH INSTITUTE FINAL DRAFT REPORT
XXXXXX, "SEISMIC EVALUATION GUIDANCE: AUGMENTED APPROACH
FOR THE RESOLUTION OF FUKUSHIMA NEAR-TERM TASK FORCE
RECOMMENDATION 2.1: SEISMIC" AS ACCEPTABLE ALTERNATIVE TO
THE MARCH 12, 2012, INFORMATION REQUEST FOR SEISMIC
REEVALUATIONS

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