



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

February 15, 2013

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

SUBJECT: ENDORSEMENT OF ELECTRIC POWER RESEARCH INSTITUTE FINAL DRAFT
REPORT 1025287, "SEISMIC EVALUATION GUIDANCE"

Dear Mr. Pollock:

On behalf of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), I am responding to the Nuclear Energy Institute's (NEI's) letter¹ of November 27, 2012, with attached Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI) final draft Report No. 1025287 entitled, "Seismic Evaluation Guidance: Screening, Prioritization and Implementation Details (SPID) for the Resolution of Fukushima Near-Term Task Force Recommendation 2.1: Seismic" (hereafter referred to as the SPID report). NEI's letter was submitted to support licensee responses to Enclosure 1 of the March 12, 2012, information request² that was issued pursuant to Title 10 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (10 CFR), Section 50.54(f) (hereafter referred to as the 50.54(f) letter). The 50.54(f) letter was issued as part of the lessons learned from the accident at the Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear facility.

The NRC staff interacted with the stakeholders on the development of the SPID report with a focus on screening, prioritization, and implementation details as they relate to performing a seismic reevaluation. The SPID report is the product of significant interaction between the NRC, NEI, EPRI, and other stakeholders, at over fifteen public meetings,³ over a 9-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 plant evaluations after updating their seismic hazard information. At each meeting, the NRC staff provided its comments on the current version of the SPID report and discussed with stakeholders proposed subsequent revisions to the document. This iterative process, over a 9-month period, resulted in the final version of the document. The NRC staff's endorsement of the SPID report, subject to the additional guidance noted below, is based upon this cumulative development process resulting from the extensive interactions between stakeholders and the NRC staff.

The NRC staff has reviewed the SPID report and confirmed that it would provide licensees with the guidance necessary to perform seismic reevaluations, and report the results to the NRC in a manner that will address the Requested Information items (1) through (9) in Enclosure 1 of the 50.54(f) letter. The SPID report is intended to provide sufficient guidance for all sites, however, each site is unique and requirements for analysis can vary. In cases where the SPID report

¹ Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS) Accession No. ML123330282

² The 50.54(f) letter is available in ADAMS under Accession No. ML12053A340.

³ Public meetings were held on March 1 - 2, April 2 - 3, May 15 - 16, June 14, July 24 - 25, August 16 and 30, September 11 and 21, October 9 and 18, November 5, 9, 14, 20, and 26, 2012.

may not account for the unique characteristics of a site, prudent and sound engineering judgment should be employed to assure all issues bearing on the hazard and risk evaluations are adequately addressed. Instances when unique site characteristics require such engineering judgment, or require analysis that is not included in the SPID report, should be clearly identified, along with the measures taken to assure the unique site characteristics are appropriately addressed.

Although the NRC staff finds that the performance and reporting of the seismic reevaluation in accordance with the SPID report would be responsive to the 50.54(f) letter, there are four further issues described below for which the NRC staff provides additional guidance. These issues are: (1) the use of the Individual Plant Examination of External Events (IPEEE) submittals for screening purposes; (2) development of foundation input response spectra (FIRS) consistent with the site response used in the development of the site-specific ground motion response spectrum (GMRS); (3) updating the seismic source models; and (4) development of the site response.

Use of IPEEE for Screening

Section 3.3 of the SPID report provides the criteria used to determine if the licensee's previous IPEEE submittal is adequate to use for screening purposes. A seismic assessment performed as part of the IPEEE program that demonstrates a plant capacity that is higher than the new GMRS can be used to screen out plants, provided they meet certain adequacy criteria.

Each licensee has the option of demonstrating the adequacy of its previous IPEEE submittal for screening purposes as part of its response to the 50.54(f) letter. The NRC staff will review each submittal and determine whether the provided information demonstrates the adequacy of the IPEEE analysis and risk insights. The licensee's description of each of the adequacy criteria, described in Section 3.3 of the SPID report, will be reviewed by the NRC staff in its integrated totality, rather than using a pass/fail approach. As such, even if one or more of the criteria are not deemed to be adequate, the staff may still decide that the overall IPEEE analysis is adequate to support its use for screening purposes. The NRC staff may conduct site visits to view IPEEE documentation referenced in support of the IPEEE adequacy submittal.

Development of Foundation Input Response Spectra (FIRS)

The SPID report does not discuss the development of FIRS used for performing soil-structure interaction analyses. Consistent with guidance described in DC/COL-ISG-017, "Ensuring Hazard-Consistent Seismic Input for Site Response and Soil Structure Interaction Analyses," the FIRS should be derived in a manner consistent with the site response used in the development of the site-specific GMRS. As such, the FIRS should be derived as performance-based site-specific response spectra at the foundation level in the free field. The starting point for development of the FIRS should be the same hard rock elevation used as the starting point for developing the GMRS. As the engineering properties of soil are strain-dependent and can be highly non-linear, the characterization of soil layers and their associated properties used in the GMRS analysis should also be used for the derivation of the site-specific FIRS at the foundation elevation. The performance-based FIRS can be developed using either a full-column outcrop motion that includes the effect of the soil above, or as a geologic outcrop motion for which the soil layers above the foundation elevation have been removed.

Updating the Central and Eastern United States (CEUS)-Seismic Source Characterization (SSC) model

Section 2.2 of the SPID report provides an overview of the CEUS-SSC model and explains why it is appropriate to use without update for the seismic reevaluations. Specifically, Section 2.2 states, "for site-specific licensing applications or site-specific safety decisions, these seismic sources would be reviewed on a site-specific basis to determine if they need to be updated. Such evaluations would be appropriate in a licensing application, where focus could be made on site-specific applications. However, for a screening-level study of multiple plants for the purpose of setting priorities, the use of these seismic sources as published is appropriate."

The NRC staff agrees that the CEUS-SSC model does not need to be updated for the seismic reevaluations, but the staff's rationale is different than that presented in the SPID report. Specifically, the staff has determined that the CEUS-SSC model does not need to be updated because the model is up-to-date and is sufficiently refined to allow a site-specific source model to be developed. To adequately respond to the 50.54(f) letter, a site-specific GMRS should be calculated for each plant so that an informed decision can be made regarding which plants will be required to complete a risk evaluation. Further, the site-specific GMRS will also be used in the risk evaluations, if needed.

Prior to issuing the CEUS-SSC model, the Technical Integration Team considered potentially significant events (such as the 2011 Mineral, VA earthquake) that had occurred after the model was developed, and determined that those events did not change their interpretations of seismic sources or earthquake recurrence rates. If a significant earthquake in the CEUS were to occur or new information were to emerge during the reevaluation period that could require an update of the CEUS-SSC model, the staff expects licensees to evaluate the significance of the new information to determine if the CEUS-SSC model needs to be updated in order to appropriately respond to the 50.54(f) request.

Site Response

Section 2.4.1 and Appendix B of the SPID report provides guidance on how to develop the site response in cases where limited site response data exists. As stated in Appendix B, the NRC staff expects licensees to use available geologic, geotechnical, and geophysical data collected during the initial licensing or subsequent activities at the site to the extent practicable. Where limited site response data exists, information from core borings and data collected from site and regional evaluations should be used to develop the site response amplification. Section 4 of the SPID report states that licensees should provide the basis for the site responses used in the reevaluations. The NRC staff expects site-specific geology, geotechnical, and geophysical information to be a significant part of the basis.

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 an alternative approach, 60 days after the issuance of the NRC-endorsed guidance. For the purpose of meeting this deadline, the 60-day response period commences on the date this endorsement of the SPID report is published in the *Federal Register*.

J. Pollock

- 4 -

Licensees may use the SPID report as one acceptable method 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 SPID report is not considered backfitting, as defined in 10 CFR 50.109(a)(1).

The NRC requests that EPRI publish a final version of the SPID report within 1 month of receipt of this letter. The final version of the SPID report should incorporate this letter between the title page and the first section, and remove the draft markings from the document. If you or your staff have additional questions, please contact my office or Mrs. Lisa Regner, of my staff at 301-415-1906, or by email at Lisa.Regner@nrc.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David L. Skeen". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "D".

David L. Skeen, Director
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Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

cc: See enclosed list
Additional distribution via Listserv

POWER REACTOR LICENSEES AND HOLDERS OF
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Duke Energy Carolinas, LLC
McGuire Nuclear Site
12700 Hagers Ferry Road
Huntersville, NC 28078

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

J. Pollock

- 4 -

Licensees may use the SPID report as one acceptable method 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 SPID report is not considered backfitting, as defined in 10 CFR 50.109(a)(1).

The NRC requests that EPRI publish a final version of the SPID report within 1 month of receipt of this letter. The final version of the SPID report should incorporate this letter between the title page and the first section, and remove the draft markings from the document. If you or your staff have additional questions, please contact my office or Mrs. Lisa Regner, of my staff at 301-415-1906, or by email at Lisa.Regner@nrc.gov.

Sincerely,

/RA/

David L. Skeen, Director
Japan Lessons-Learned Project Directorate
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

cc: See enclosed list
Additional distribution via Listserv

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Letter to Joseph E. Pollock from David L. Skeen dated February 15, 2013

SUBJECT: ENDORSEMENT OF ELECTRIC POWER RESEARCH INSTITUTE FINAL DRAFT
REPORT 1025287, "SEISMIC EVALUATION GUIDANCE"

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