NRC Report Questions Hospri Study Reports

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Avila Beach — A report made public by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission questions the accuracy of information contained in a safety analysis report on the Hospri geologic fault used in the final safety evaluation for Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant.

The report also for the first time places some blame for design errors at the plant on URS Blume Associates, a seismic consultant to Pacific Gas and Electric Co.

According to NRC spokesman Jim Hanchett, the report conclusion is that the final evaluation based on inaccurate information was based on inaccurate information with regard to studies of three areas of the plant: its auxiliary building, cooling water intake structure and a crane in the containment building that houses the reactor.

Rather than utilize revised earthquake information Blume gave in 1979 for those areas, PG&E used 1977 data for its Hospri analysis and later evaluation. PG&E also did not inform the NRC of the later studies.

The report says the inaccuracies were caused by "a lack of thoroughness in technical review" by PG&E, Hanchett said.

"Inadequate communication" among Blume personnel and a failure on the consultant's part to "clearly indicate substantive changes between preliminary and final reports," was also cited, he added.

In determining earthquake safety of the auxiliary building, URS Blume did not take into account information PG&E had developed about the amount of shaking that would occur at different elevations in the structure, the NRC report said.

The 1979 data might not have been taken into account in other areas, the report suggests. Study should be made to determine if conclusions might differ in such cases, the report adds.

PG&E spokesman Greg Pruett said Thursday the later studies were not filed at the time they were received because PG&E engineers thought the 1979 data was a lumping together in one form all data already developed and used.

On some points, engineers also thought the 1977 data was more conservative than the later information, Pruett said.

"You always want to go for the biggest margin of safety," he explained.

"At this time, we do not believe it will have any effect whatever on the seismic safety of the plant," Pruett added.

He also said he didn't think "the finger can be pointed at URS Blume" with regard to the problems discovered at the plant.

These occurred primarily because of the way in which PG&E reviewed the information given it by Blume, Pruett added.

A spokeswoman for URS Blume referred a reporter to PG&E for comment concerning Diablo Canyon.

The omission of data was one point plant opponents focused on Wednesday in a meeting with PG&E and the NRC about the scope of a proposed review of the plant, according to Joel Reynolds, an attorney for opponents Mothers for Peace.

Richard Hubbard, technical consultant to Gov. Edmund G. Brown Jr., said he pointed out six discrepancies he believes exist in PG&E's review proposal.

Among them was the claim that 13 out of the 15 regulatory requirements for quality assurance at the plant have been "violated in some manner," Hubbard said.

Hubbard said he told the NRC staff he believes PG&E's proposed review does not meet requirements set forth by the NRC when it suspended the low power operating license for the plant.

More areas of the plant should be reviewed and low power and full power provisions should no longer be separated from questions of "safety in general," Hubbard added.

Hubbard said opponents renewed their offer to PG&E that all parties sit down and negotiate who should audit the plant and what the scope of the review should be.

PG&E has proposed that Dr. Robert L. Cloud of Berkeley, along with R.F. Reedy Inc. and Teledyne Engineering Services, conduct the review. Over the past several months, opponents have questioned Cloud's independence.

PG&E spokesman Chris Piper noted Thursday "it is not a matter of compromising on the issue of Cloud. It is an issue of having made a program proposal in accordance with their (NRC) order."

"All we really want is a ruling on that proposal," he said.

Additionally, Piper said, PG&E believes it would be "a tremendous disservice" to Cloud and "the entire engineering profession, perhaps, if someone who is deemed to be entirely competent can be hounded out of a project this way for unjustified indictments."

Piper noted that PG&E had offered Teledyne, one of Gov. Brown's choices for an auditor, as a participant in the review.

It could as easily be asked "why the governor and joint intervenors won't compromise and accept that as ensuring independence," Piper concluded.