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San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station Confirmatory Action Letter Fact Sheet

What is a CAL?

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) issues Confirmatory Action Letters (CALs) to nuclear licensees to formally acknowledge certain actions that the licensee is taking to resolve specific issues in a timely and effective manner.

Background

San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station's (SONGS) Unit 2 was taken out of service for a planned outage on Jan. 9. Unit 3 has been shut down since Jan. 31, when it was safely taken off line after station operators detected a leak in one of the unit's steam generator tubes. Inspections of some of the tubes inside the Unit 2 and 3 steam generators showed areas of tube wear.

A CAL was issued to Southern California Edison (SCE), majority owner and operator of SONGS, on March 27, 2012, outlining actions SCE will complete before seeking permission from the NRC to restart Unit 2 and Unit 3. The CAL formalizes commitments that SCE has made to ensure the causes of the tube wear in the steam generators are understood and appropriately addressed in order to ensure safe operation. SCE will only return the units to service when the company and the NRC are satisfied it is safe to do so.

Prior to receiving the CAL, SCE had submitted a letter to the NRC describing a series of actions it is taking regarding steam generator issues at SONGS. Among other actions, this includes:

- Conducting in-situ pressure testing of tubes with potentially significant wear
- Plugging all tubes demonstrating excessive wear
- Plugging additional tubes as a precautionary measure
- Determining the cause or causes of tube-to-tube interactions that resulted in tube wear and implementing corrective actions to preserve tube integrity
- Developing a protocol for future steam generator inspections, including mid-cycle shutdowns for inspections

Actions Completed To Date

SCE has identified a wear mechanism caused by tubes that were vibrating and rubbing against adjacent tubes. Tube wear was also observed where tubes had rubbed against certain supports in both units. The company continues to analyze inspection and test data, and is conducting additional inspections to determine why these wear mechanisms are occurring.

To date, SCE has:

- Conducted in-situ pressure testing on 129 tubes in Unit 3 after initial inspections identified tube-to-tube wear. A total of eight tubes failed certain tests.
- Identified additional tube wear in two of the 19,454 tubes in the Unit 2 generators that was similar to the type of wear previously seen in Unit 3.
- Plugged a total of 510 tubes in Unit 2 steam generators and a total of 807 tubes in Unit 3.

SCE will proceed deliberately and conservatively to implement the steps outlined in the CAL, always bearing in mind that safety is the first and foremost priority.