

proposed changes have no adverse effect on the probability of any accident. No changes are being made in the types or amounts of any radiological effluents that may be released offsite. There is no significant increase in the allowable individual or cumulative occupational radiation exposure.

The environmental impacts of transportation resulting from the use of higher enrichment fuel and extended irradiation were published and discussed in the staff assessment entitled, "NRC Assessment of the Environmental Effects of Transportation Resulting from Extended Fuel Enrichment and Irradiation," dated July 7, 1988, and published in the **Federal Register** (53 FR 30355) on August 11, 1988, as corrected on August 24, 1988 (53 FR 32322), in connection with Shearon Harris Nuclear Power Plant, Unit 1: Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact. As indicated therein, the environmental cost contribution of the proposed increase in the fuel enrichment and irradiation limits are either unchanged or may, in fact, be reduced from those summarized in Table S-4 as set forth in 10 CFR 51.52(c). The results of the Shearon Harris assessment are applicable to McGuire, Units 1 and 2. Accordingly, the Commission concludes that there are no significant radiological environmental impacts associated with the proposed amendment.

With regard to potential nonradiological impacts, the proposed action involves features located entirely within the restricted area as defined in 10 CFR Part 20. It does not affect nonradiological plant effluents and has no other environmental impact. Accordingly, the Commission concludes that there are no significant nonradiological environmental impacts associated with the proposed action.

Alternatives to the Proposed Action

Since the Commission has concluded there is no measurable environmental impact associated with the proposed exemption, any alternatives with equal or greater environmental impact need not be evaluated. The principal alternative to this action would be to deny the request for exemption. Such action would not reduce the environmental impacts of plant operations.

Alternative Use of Resources

This action does not involve the use of resources not previously considered in the "Final Environmental Statement Related to the Operation of McGuire Nuclear Station Units 1 and 2," dated

April 1976 and its addendum dated January 1981.

Agencies and Persons Consulted

In accordance with its stated policy, on August 17, 1995, the NRC staff consulted with the North Carolina State official, Mr. Dayne H. Brown, Director, Department of Environmental Health and Natural Resources, Division of Radiation Protection, regarding the environmental impact of the proposed action. The State official had no comments.

Finding of No Significant Impact

Based upon the environmental assessment, the Commission concludes that the proposed action will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment. Accordingly, the Commission has determined not to prepare an environmental impact statement for the proposed exemption.

For further details with respect to this action, see the licensee's letter dated June 13, 1994, as supplemented by letters dated August 15, 1994, March 23 and April 18, 1995, which are available for public inspection at the Commission's Public Document Room, The Gelman Building, 2120 L Street, NW., Washington, DC, and at the local public document room located at the Atkins Library, University of North Carolina, Charlotte (UNCC), North Carolina.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 17th day of August 1995.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Louis L. Wheeler,

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[FR Doc. 95-21029 Filed 8-23-95; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7590-01-P

[Docket No. 50-271]

Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Corporation; Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Station; Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) is considering issuance of an exemption and revocation of an exemption from Facility Operating License No. DPR-28, issued to Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Corporation (the licensee), for operation of the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Station (the facility) located in Windham County, Vermont.

Environmental Assessment

Identification of Proposed Actions

The proposed exemption would grant relief in certain outdoor areas of the protected area of the facility to allow use of security lighting for outdoor access and egress and the performance of one specified task for compliance with Section III.J of Appendix R to 10 CFR Part 50. The exemption would include outdoor portions of the protected area for access and egress and for hookup of a portable fuel oil transfer pump.

The proposed exemption is in accordance with the licensee's application for exemption dated June 29, 1995.

The exemption proposed for revocation related to emergency lighting requirements in the Reactor Building. The exemption was issued June 26, 1989, and is no longer needed by the licensee because conforming emergency lighting has been installed in the affected area.

The Need for the Proposed Actions

The proposed exemption is needed because the features described in the licensee's request regarding existing security lighting at the facility are the most practical method for satisfying the underlying purpose of Appendix R and literal compliance with the regulation would not further enhance the fire protection capability significantly.

Revocation of the 1989 exemption is needed to accurately reflect actual plant conditions, given conforming lighting has been installed in the affected areas.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Actions

The Commission has completed its evaluation of the proposed exemption and revocation of exemption and concludes that the proposed exemption and revocation will provide a degree of fire protection such that there is no increase in the risk of fires at the facility. Consequently, the probability of fires has not been increased and the post-fire radiological releases will not be greater than previously determined, nor do the proposed exemption and revocation otherwise affect radiological plant effluents.

The change will not increase the probability or consequences of accidents, no changes are being made in the types of any effluents that may be released offsite, and there is no significant increase in the allowable individual or cumulative occupational radiation exposure. Accordingly, the Commission concludes that there are no significant radiological environmental

impacts associated with the proposed actions.

With regard to potential nonradiological impacts, the proposed actions involve features located entirely within the restricted area as defined in 10 CFR Part 20. They do not affect nonradiological plant effluents and have no other environmental impact.

Accordingly, the Commission concludes that there are no significant nonradiological environmental impacts associated with the proposed actions.

Alternatives to the Proposed Actions

Since the Commission has concluded there is no measurable environmental impact associated with the proposed actions, any alternatives with equal or greater environmental impact need not be evaluated. As an alternative to the proposed actions, the staff considered denial of the proposed actions. Denial of the application would result in no change in current environmental impacts. The environmental impacts of the proposed actions and the alternative action are similar.

Alternative Use of Resources

These actions do not involve use of resources not previously considered in the Final Environmental Statement for the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Station.

Agencies and Persons Consulted

In accordance with its stated policy, on July 21, 1995, the staff consulted with the Vermont State official, Mr. William K. Sherman of the Vermont Department of Public Service, regarding the environmental impact of the proposed actions. The State official had no comments.

Finding of No Significant Impact

Based upon the environmental assessment, the Commission concludes that the proposed actions will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment. Accordingly, the Commission has determined not to prepare an environmental impact statement for the proposed exemption and revocation of exemption.

For further details with respect to the proposed actions, see the application dated June 29, 1995, which is available for public inspection at the Commission's Public Document Room, The Gelman Building, 2120 L Street, NW., Washington, DC, and at the local public document room located at the Brooks Memorial Library, 224 Main Street, Brattleboro, VT 05301.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland this 17th day of August 1995.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Ronald W. Hernan,

*Acting Director, Project Directorate I-3,
Division of Reactor Projects—I/II, Office of
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[FR Doc. 95-21030 Filed 8-23-95; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7590-01-P

[Docket No. 50-414]

Duke Power Company, et al. (Catawba Nuclear Station, Unit No. 2); Exemption

I

The Duke Power Company, et al. (DPC or the licensee) is the holder of Facility Operating License No. NPF-52, which authorizes operation of the Catawba Nuclear Station, Unit No. 2 (the facility), at a steady-state reactor power level not in excess of 3411 megawatts thermal. The facility is a pressurized water reactor located at the licensee's site in York County, South Carolina. The license provides, among other things, that the Catawba Nuclear Station is subject to all rules, regulations, and Orders of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission or NRC) now or hereafter in effect.

II

Section III.D.1.(a) of Appendix J to 10 CFR Part 50 requires the performance of three Type A containment integrated leakage rate tests (ILRTs) at approximately equal intervals during each 10-year service period of the primary containment. The third test of each set shall be conducted when the plant is shut down for the 10-year inservice inspection of the primary containment.

III

By letters dated May 18, 1995, and May 31, 1995, the licensee requested temporary relief from the requirement to perform a set of three Type A tests at approximately equal intervals during each 10-year service period of the primary containment. The requested exemption would permit a one-time interval extension of the third Type A test by approximately 30 months (from the 1995 refueling outage, which begins in October 1995, to the end-of-cycle 8 (EOC-8) refueling outage, currently scheduled for March 1997) and would permit the third Type A test of the second 10-year inservice inspection period to not correspond with the end of the current inservice inspection interval.

The licensee's request concluded that the proposed change, a one-time extension of the interval between the

second and third ILRTs at Catawba Unit 2, is justified for the following reasons.

The previous testing history at Catawba Unit 2 provides substantial justification for the proposed test interval extension. In each of the two previous periodic ILRTs at Catawba Unit 2, the as-found leakage was less than or equal to 48.7% of the allowable leakage, thereby demonstrating that Catawba Unit 2 is a low-leakage containment. There are no mechanisms which would adversely affect the structural integrity of the containment, or that would be a factor in extending the test interval by 30 months. However, as a preventative maintenance measure, a containment civil inspection, currently required by Appendix J prior to a Type A test, will be performed during EOC-7 in October 1995 to verify that no structural degradation exists. Any additional risk created by the longer interval between ILRTs is considered to be negligible, primarily because Type B and C testing will continue unchanged.

Additionally, the licensee stated that its exemption request meets the requirements of 10 CFR 50.12, paragraphs (a)(1) and (a)(2)(ii), for the following reasons:

In order to justify the granting of an exemption to the requirements of 10 CFR Part 50, paragraph 50.12(a)(1) requires that the licensee show that the proposed exemption will not pose an undue risk to the public. That this proposed change will not pose an undue risk is demonstrated by the analysis presented in draft NUREG-1493, which concludes that an increase in the test interval to once every 20 years would "lead to an imperceptible increase in risk." The analyses in draft NUREG-1493 are considered to be specifically applicable to Catawba because: (1) The requested exemption would result in a one-time increase in the test interval to about 5 years, not 20; (2) the population density around Catawba is less than that used in the study (329 people per square mile, vs. 340 used in the study); (3) no ILRT at Catawba has failed; (4) the core inventory used in the study was represented by a 3412 Mwt PWR [pressurized water reactor]. Catawba is a 3411 Mwt PWR. Other factors which lead to the conclusion that the proposed change will not pose an undue risk include the fact that local leak rate testing, which identifies 97% of leakage in excess of prescribed limits, will remain in place at its current test frequency; the detailed, proceduralized containment civil inspection which is normally performed in conjunction with an ILRT will be performed in place of the scheduled ILRT, to identify potential structural deteriorations; and the historical leak-tightness of the containment structure, as evidenced by two successive ILRTs in which the as-found leakage did not exceed 48.7% of the allowable leakage rate. A table which shows the leak test history of Catawba Unit 2 follows this Attachment.