

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 19th day of October 1995.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.
Victor Nerses,

*Acting Director, Project Directorate II-2,
Division of Reactor Projects—I/II, Office of
Nuclear Reactor Regulation.*

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[Docket Nos. 50-280 and 50-281]

**Virginia Electric and Power Company;
Surry Power Station, Units 1 and 2
Environmental Assessment and
Finding of No Significant Impact**

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) is considering issuance of an exemption from certain requirements of its regulations to Facility Operating License Nos. DPR-32 and DPR-37, issued to Virginia Electric and Power Company, (the licensee), for operation of the Surry Power Station, Units 1 and 2 located in Surry County, Virginia.

Environmental Assessment

Identification of Proposed Action

The proposed action would grant an exemption from certain requirements of 10 CFR 50.60, "Acceptance Criteria for Fracture Prevention Measures for Light-Water Nuclear Power Reactors for Normal Operation," to allow application of an alternate methodology to determine the low temperature overpressure protection (LTOP) setpoint for the Surry Power Station, Units 1 and 2. The proposed alternate methodology is consistent with guidelines developed by the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) Working Group on Operating Plant Criteria (WGOPC) to define pressure limits during LTOP events that avoid certain unnecessary operational restrictions, provide adequate margins against failure of the reactor pressure vessel, and reduce the potential for unnecessary activation of pressure-relieving devices used for LTOP. These guidelines have been incorporated into Code Case N-514, "Low Temperature Overpressure Protection," which has been approved by the ASME Code Committee. The content of this code case has been incorporated into Appendix G of Section XI of the ASME Code and published in the 1993 Addenda to Section XI.

The philosophy used to develop Code Case N-514 guidelines is to ensure that the LTOP limits are still below the pressure/temperature (P/T) limits for normal operation, but allow the pressure that may occur with activation

of pressure-relieving devices to exceed the P/T limits, provided acceptable margins are maintained during these events. This philosophy protects the pressure vessel from LTOP events, and still maintains the Technical Specification P/T limits applicable for normal heatup and cooldown in accordance with Appendix G to 10 CFR Part 50 and Sections III and XI of the ASME Code.

The Need for the Proposed Action

Pursuant to 10 CFR 50.60, all light-water nuclear power reactors must meet the fracture toughness and material surveillance program requirements for the reactor coolant pressure boundary as set forth in Appendices G and H to 10 CFR Part 50. Appendix G to 10 CFR Part 50 defines P/T limits during any condition of normal operation, including anticipated operational occurrences and system hydrostatic tests, to which the pressure boundary may be subjected over its service lifetime. It is specified in 10 CFR 50.60(b) that alternatives to the described requirements in Appendices G and H to 10 CFR Part 50 may be used when an exemption is granted by the Commission under 10 CFR 50.12.

To prevent transients that would produce pressure excursions exceeding the Appendix G P/T limits while the reactor is operating at low temperatures, the licensee installed an LTOP system. The LTOP system includes pressure relieving devices in the form of Power-Operated Relief Valves (PORVs) that are set at a pressure low enough that if a transient occurred while the coolant temperature is below the LTOP enabling temperature, they would prevent the pressure in the reactor vessel from exceeding the Appendix G P/T limits. To prevent these valves from lifting as a result of normal operating pressure surges (e.g., reactor coolant pump starting, and shifting operating charging pumps) with the reactor coolant system in a water solid condition, the operating pressure must be maintained below the PORV setpoint.

The reactor coolant system pressure/temperature operating window at low temperatures is defined by the LTOP setpoint. Minimal operating margin is available between the LTOP setpoint and the pressure experienced at low temperatures due to the startup of a reactor coolant pump, or as a result of normal operating pressure surges with the reactor coolant system in a water solid condition. Implementation of a LTOP setpoint that is valid from 15 EFPY to the end-of-license without the additional margin allowed by ASME Code Case N-514 would restrict the

pressure/temperature operating window and would potentially result in undesired PORV lifts. Therefore, the licensee proposed that in determining the PORV setpoint for LTOP events for Surry, the allowable pressure be determined using the safety margins developed in an alternate methodology in lieu of the safety margins required by Appendix G to 10 CFR Part 50. The alternate methodology is consistent with ASME Code Case N-514. The content of this code case has been incorporated into Appendix G of Section XI of the ASME Code and published in the 1993 Addenda to Section XI.

An exemption from 10 CFR 50.60 is required to use the alternate methodology for calculating the maximum allowable pressure for LTOP considerations. By application dated June 8, 1995, the licensee requested an exemption from 10 CFR 50.60.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action

The Commission has completed its evaluation of the proposed action.

Appendix G of the ASME Code requires that the P/T limits be calculated: (a) using a safety factor of 2 on the principal membrane (pressure) stresses, (b) assuming a flaw at the surface with a depth of one-quarter (1/4) of the vessel wall thickness and a length of six (6) times its depth, and (c) using a conservative fracture toughness curve that is based on the lower bound of static, dynamic, and crack arrest fracture toughness tests on material similar to the Surry reactor vessel material.

In determining the PORV setpoint for LTOP events, the licensee proposed to use safety margins based on an alternate methodology consistent with the proposed ASME Code Case N-514 guidelines. The ASME Code Case N-514 allows determination of the setpoint for LTOP events such that the maximum pressure in the vessel would not exceed 110% of the P/T limits of the existing ASME Appendix G.

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 action.

With regard to potential non-radiological impacts, the proposed change involves use of a lower safety margin on fracture toughness for

determining the PORV setpoint during LTOP events; but reduces the potential for activation of pressure relieving devices, thereby improving plant safety. It does not affect non-radiological plant effluents and has no other environmental impact. Therefore, the Commission concludes that there are no significant non-radiological 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 action, any alternatives with equal or greater environmental impact need not be evaluated. As an alternative to the proposed action, the staff considered denial of the proposed action. Denial of the application would result in no change in current environmental impacts. The environmental impacts of the proposed action and the alternative action are similar.

Alternative Use of Resources

This action does not involve the use of any resources not previously considered in the Final Environmental Statement for the Surry Power Station, Units 1 and 2.

Agencies and Persons Consulted

In accordance with its stated policy, on October 13, 1995, the staff consulted with the Virginia State official, Mr. Foldesi of the State Health Department, 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 action.

For further details with respect to the proposed action, see the licensee's letter dated June 8, 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 Swem Library, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia 23185.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 18th day of October 1995.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission

David B. Matthews,

Director, Project Directorate II-1, Division of Reactor Projects—II, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation.

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[Docket Nos. 50-390 and 50-391]

Watts Bar Nuclear Plant, Units 1 and 2 Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact

The U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) is considering granting an exemption from certain requirements of its regulations to Watts Bar Nuclear Plant, Units 1 and 2, located in Spring City, Tennessee. Operating licenses have not been issued for Watts Bar; Units 1 and 2 are currently under Construction Permits CPPR-91 and CPPR-92, respectively.

Environmental Assessment

Identification of Proposed Action

By letter dated July 19, 1995, as supplemented by letters of July 26 and September 6, 1995, Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) requested an exemption from the ingestion pathway portion of the requirement in 10 CFR Part 50, Appendix E, Section IV.F.2(a), which states that a full-participation exercise shall be conducted within 2 years before the issuance of the initial operating license for full power (authorizing operation above 5 percent of rated power) of the first reactor and shall include participation by each State and local government within the plume exposure pathway emergency planning zone (EPZ) and each State within the ingestion exposure pathway EPZ. Specifically, TVA requested relief from the requirement to include participation of each State within the ingestion exposure pathway EPZ during the Watts Bar exercise scheduled for November 1995, because in 1992 and 1993 the State of Tennessee participated in full-participation exercises which included the ingestion pathway EPZs at Sequoyah and Watts Bar, respectively. The State of Tennessee supported TVA's request for an exemption because it would encounter financial hardship if it has to participate.

The Need for the Proposed Action

The NRC may grant exemptions from the requirements of 10 CFR Part 50 which, pursuant to 10 CFR 50.12(a), are (1) authorized by law, will not present an undue risk to the public health and safety, and are consistent with the common defense and security, and (2)

present special circumstances. Section 50.12(a)(2) of 10 CFR Part 50 describes the special circumstances for an exemption. Special circumstances are present when the application of the regulation in the particular circumstances would not serve the underlying purpose of the rule or is not necessary to achieve the underlying purpose of the rule [10 CFR 50.12(a)(2)(ii)]. The underlying purpose of Appendix E, Section IV.F.2(a) is to demonstrate the integrated capabilities of appropriate local and State authorities and licensee personnel to adequately assess and respond to an accident at a commercial nuclear power plant within 2 years before the issuance of the initial operating license for full power (authorizing operation above 5 percent of rated power) of the first reactor on a site. Special circumstances are also present when compliance would result in undue hardship or other costs that are significantly in excess of those contemplated when the regulation was adopted [10 CFR 50.12(a)(2)(iii)]. Additionally, special circumstances are present when the exemption would provide only temporary relief from the applicable regulation and the licensee or applicant has made good faith efforts to comply with the regulation [10 CFR 50.12(a)(2)(v)].

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action

The applicant's request for exemption involves aspects of the upcoming full-participation emergency exercise, but does not involve any design or construction activity. The proposed action will not increase the probability or consequences of accidents, makes no changes in the types of any effluents that may be released offsite, and does not increase the allowable individual or cumulative occupational radiation exposure. Accordingly, the Commission concludes that there are no significant radiological environmental impacts associated with the proposed action.

With regard to potential nonradiological impacts, the proposed action does not involve any activity that results in release of any 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.

Alternative to the Proposed Action

Since the Commission has concluded there is no measurable environmental impact associated with the proposed action, any alternatives with equal or greater environmental impact need not