

with the spent fuel handling tool. This permits moving the cans in an easy fashion.

Rod consolidation pilot project campaigns in the past have consisted of underwater tooling that is manipulated by an overhead crane and operated by a maintenance worker. This is a very slow and repetitive process.

The industry experience with rod consolidation has been mixed thus far. The principal advantages of this technology are: The ability to modularize, compatibility with the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) waste management system, moderate cost, no need of additional land and no additional required surveillance. The disadvantages are: potential gap activity release due to rod breakage; potential for increased fuel cladding corrosion due to some of the protective oxide layer being scraped off; potential interference of the (prolonged) consolidation activity, which might interfere with ongoing plant operation; and lack of sufficient industry experience. The drawbacks associated with consolidation are expected to diminish in time. However, it is the SCE&G's view that rod consolidation technology has not matured sufficiently to make this a viable option for the present VCSNS spent fuel pool limitations.

#### *On-Site Dry Cask Storage*

Dry cask storage is a method of storing spent nuclear fuel in a high capacity container. The cask provides radiation shielding and passive heat dissipation. Typical capacities for pressurized-water reactor fuel range from 21 to 37 assemblies that have been removed from the reactor for at least 5 years. The casks, once loaded, are then stored outdoors on a seismically qualified concrete pad.

The casks, as presently licensed, are limited to 20-year storage service life. Once the 20 years has expired, the cask manufacturer or the utility must recertify the cask or the utility must remove the spent fuel from the container. In the interim, DOE has embraced the concept of multi-purpose canisters obsolescing all existing licensed cask designs. Work is also continuing by several companies, including Holtec International, to provide an [a] multi-purpose canister system that will be capable of long storage, transport, and final disposal in a repository. Holtec International's HI-STAR System can store up to 24 pressurized-water reactor assemblies. It is noted that a cask system makes substantial demands on the resources of a plant. For example, the plant must provide for a decontamination facility where the outgoing cask can be decontaminated for release.

There are several plant modifications required to support cask use. Tap-ins must be made to the gaseous waste system, and chilled water to support vacuum drying of the spent fuel and piping must be installed to return cask water back to the Spent Fuel Pool/Cask Loading Pit. A seismic concrete pad must be made to store the loaded casks. This pad must have a security fence, surveillance protection, a diesel generator for emergency power, and video surveillance for the duration of fuel storage, which may extend beyond the life of the adjacent plant.

Finally, the cask park must have facilities to vacuum dry the cask, backfill it with helium, make leak checks, remachine the gasket surfaces if leaks persist, and assemble the cask on-site.

To summarize, based on the required short time schedule, the status of the dry spent fuel storage industry, and the storage expansion costs, the most acceptable alternative for increasing fuel storage capacity at VCSNS is expansion of the wet storage capacity.

#### **No-Action Alternative**

As an alternative to the proposed action, the staff considered denial of the proposed action (*i.e.*, the "no-action" alternative). Denial of the application would result in no change in current environmental impacts. The environmental impacts of the proposed action and the alternative actions are similar.

The alternative technologies that could create additional storage capacity involve additional fuel handling with increased opportunity for fuel handling accidents, involve higher commutative doses to workers affecting the fuel transfers and would not result in a significant improvement in environmental impacts compared to the proposed reracking modifications.

#### *Alternative Use of Resources*

The action does not involve the use of any different resources than those previously considered in the Final Environmental Statement for VCSNS (NUREG-0719) dated May 1981.

#### *Agencies and Persons Consulted*

On July 23, 2002, the staff consulted with the South Carolina State official, Mr. Henry Porter of the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control, regarding the environmental impact of the proposed action. The State official had no comments.

#### **Finding of No Significant Impact**

On the basis of the environmental assessment, the NRC concludes that the proposed action will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment. Accordingly, the NRC 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 July 24, 2001, and supplemental letters dated April 4, 2002, May 7, 2002, June 17, 2002, July 2, 2002, July 15, 2002, and July 25, 2002. Documents may be examined, and/or copied for a fee, at the NRC's Public Document Room (PDR), located at One White Flint North, 11555 Rockville Pike (first floor),

Rockville, Maryland. Publicly available records will be accessible electronically from the Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS) Public Electronic Reading Room on the Internet at the NRC Web site, <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html>. Persons who do not have access to ADAMS or who encounter problems in accessing the documents located in ADAMS should contact the NRC PDR Reference staff by telephone at 1-800-397-4209 or 301-415-4737, or by e-mail to [pdr@nrc.gov](mailto:pdr@nrc.gov).

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 26th day of August, 2002.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

**John A. Nakoski,**

*Chief, Section 1, Project Directorate II, Division of Licensing Project Management, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation.*

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## **NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION**

### **Advisory Committee on Nuclear Waste; Public-Outreach Session**

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission's (NRC's) Advisory Committee on Nuclear Waste (ACNW) will hold a public-outreach session on September 23, 2002, 5 p.m. to 7 p.m., at the Bob Ruud Community Center, 150 North Highway 160 and Basin Avenue, Pahrump, Nevada. This public-outreach session is a continuation of the ACNW's efforts to gain further insights into stakeholders' concerns and perspectives on the proposed geologic repository at Yucca Mountain, Nevada. There is no set agenda for the public-outreach session, and interested stakeholders will be able to discuss their views with ACNW members individually.

If you have any questions concerning this notice or intend to address the ACNW in the public-outreach session, please contact Michael P. Lee, ACNW Senior Staff Engineer, by telephone (301-415-6677), facsimile (301-415-5589), or e-mail ([MPL@nrc.gov](mailto:MPL@nrc.gov)). Please be aware that neither the ACNW nor the NRC will bear any financial cost or obligation related to stakeholder participation in the session.

Dated: August 23, 2002.

**Sher Bahadur,**

*Associate Director for Technical Support, ACRS/ACNW.*

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