

access control badges will continue to be used for all individuals who are authorized access to protected areas without escorts. Badges will continue to be displayed by all individuals while inside the protected area. Addition of a hand geometry biometrics system will provide a significant contribution to effective implementation of the security plan at each site.

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 nonradiological impacts, the proposed action does involve 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.

Alternative to the Proposed Action

Since the Commission has concluded there is not 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 Statements related to operation of River Bend Station, Unit 1.

Agencies and Persons Consulted

In accordance with its states policy, on May 16, 1995, the staff consulted with the Louisiana State official, Dr. Stan Shaw, Assistant Administrator of the Louisiana Radiation Protection Division, Department of Environmental Quality, regarding the environmental impact of the proposed action. The State official had no comments.

Findings of No Significant Impact

Based on 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 this proposed action, see the request for exemption dated October 24, 1994, which is available for public inspection at the Commission's Public Document Room, 2120 L Street, NW., Washington, DC, and at the local public document room located at the Government Documents Department, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA 70803.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland this 30th day of May 1995.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

David L. Wigginton,

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[Docket Nos. 50-498 and 499]

Houston Lighting & Power Company City Public Service Board of San Antonio Central Power and Light Company City of Austin, Texas; South Texas Project, 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 Facility Operating License Nos. NPF-76 and NPF-80, issued to Houston Lighting & Power Company (HL&P) acting on behalf of itself and for the City Public Service Board of San Antonio (CPS), Central Power and Light Company (CPL), and City of Austin, Texas (COA) (the licensees), for operation of the South Texas Project, Units 1 and 2, (STP) located in Matagorda County, Texas.

Environmental Assessment

Identification of the Proposed Action

The proposed action would allow implementation of a hand geometry biometric system of site access control such that photograph identification badges can be taken offsite.

The proposed action is in accordance with the licensee's application dated March 27, 1995, for exemption from certain requirements of 10 CFR 73.55, "Requirements for physical protection of licensed activities in nuclear power

plant reactors against radiological sabotage."

The Need for the Proposed Action

Pursuant to 10 CFR 73.55, paragraph (a), the licensee shall establish and maintain an onsite physical protection system and security organization.

"Access Requirements," of 10 CFR 73.55(d), paragraph (1), specifies that "licensee shall control all points of personnel and vehicle access into a protected area. . . ." It is specified in 10 CFR 73.55(d)(5) that "A numbered picture badge identification system shall be used for all individuals who are authorized access to protected areas without escort." It also states that an individual not employed by the licensee (i.e., contractors) may be authorized access to protected areas without escort provided the individual "receives a picture badge upon entrance into the protected area which must be returned upon exit from the protected area. . . ."

Currently, unescorted access into protected areas of STP is controlled through the use of a photograph on a combination badge and keycard (hereafter referred to as a badge). The security officers at each entrance station use the photograph on the badge to visually identify the individual requesting access. The badges for both licensee employees and contractor personnel, who have been granted unescorted access, are issued upon entrance at each entrance/exit location and are returned upon exit. The badges are stored and are retrievable at each entrance/exit location. In accordance with 10 CFR 73.55(d)(5), contractor individuals are not allowed to take badges offsite. In accordance with the plants' physical security plans, neither licensee employees nor contractors are allowed to take badges offsite.

The licensee proposes to implement an alternative unescorted access control system which would eliminate the need to issue and retrieve badges at each entrance/exit location and would allow all individuals with unescorted access to keep their badges with them when departing the site.

An exemption from 10 CFR 73.55(d)(5) is required to permit contractors to take their badges offsite instead of returning them when exiting the site.

The Commission has completed its evaluation of the proposed action. Under the proposed system, each individual who is authorized for unescorted entry into protected areas would have the physical characteristics of their hand (hand geometry) registered with their badge number in the access control system. When an individual

enters the badge into the card reader and places the hand on the measuring surface, the system would record the individual's hand image. The unique characteristics of the extracted hand image would be compared with the previously stored template to verify authorization for entry. Individuals, including licensee employees and contractors, would be allowed to keep their badge with them when they depart the site.

Based on a Sandia report entitled "A Performance Evaluation of Biometric Identification Devices" (SAND91-0276 UC-906 Unlimited Release, Printed June 1991), and on its experience with the current photo-identification system, the licensee concludes that the proposed hand geometry system will provide the same high assurance objective regarding onsite physical protection that is achieved by the current system. Since both the badge and hand geometry would be necessary for access into the protected area, the proposed system would provide for a positive verification process. Potential loss of a badge by an individual, as a result of taking the badge offsite, would not enable an unauthorized entry into protected areas. The licensee will implement a process for testing the proposed system to ensure a continued overall level of performance equivalent to that specified in the regulation. The Physical Security Plans for both sites will be revised to include implementation and testing of the hand geometry access control system and to allow licensee employees and contractors to take their badges offsite.

The access process will continue to be under the observation of security personnel. A numbered picture badge identification system will continue to be used for all individuals who are authorized access to protected areas without escorts. Badges will continue to be displayed by all individuals while inside the protected area.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action

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 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 action, any alternatives with equal or greater environmental impact need not be evaluated. The principal alternative to the action would be to deny the request. Such action would not change any 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 related to the operation of South Texas Project, Units 1 and 2," dated August 1986.

Agencies and Persons Consulted

In accordance with its stated policy, on May 12, 1995, the staff consulted with the Texas State official, Arthur C. Tate of the Bureau of Radiation Control, Texas Department of Health, regarding the environmental impact of the proposed action. The State official had no comments.

Findings of No Significant Impact

Based on the environmental assessment, the Commission concludes that the proposed action will not have a significant impact 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 March 27, 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 Wharton County Junior College, J.M. Hodges Learning Center, 911 Boling Highway, Wharton, TX 77488.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 31st day of May 1995.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Thomas W. Alexion,

Project Manager, Project Directorate IV-1, Division of Reactor Projects III/IV, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation.

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[Docket No. 50-443]

North Atlantic Energy Service Corporation, Seabrook Station, Unit No. 1; Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) is considering issuance of an exemption from Facility Operating License No. NPF-86, issued to North Atlantic Energy Service Corporation (the licensee or North Atlantic), for operation of the Seabrook Station, Unit No. 1 (Seabrook) located in Rockingham County, New Hampshire.

Environmental Assessment

Identification of the Proposed Action

This Environmental Assessment has been prepared to address potential environmental issues related to North Atlantic's request for exemption dated October 17, 1994, as supplemented by letters dated February 13, 1995, April 26, 1995, and May 12, 1995. The proposed action would exempt North Atlantic from certain requirements of 10 CFR 73.55. The proposed action would allow North Atlantic to eliminate issuing and retrieving photograph identification badges at the entrance and exit location to the Seabrook protected area upon implementation of a biometric (hand geometry) system of site access control. North Atlantic would be authorized to permit all individuals with unescorted access, including North Atlantic employees, contractor personnel, NRC employees, and others to retain their badges when leaving the Seabrook protected area.

The Need for the Proposed Action

The requirements for the establishment and maintenance of a physical protection system against theft of special nuclear material and against radiological sabotage at certain sites where special nuclear material is used are prescribed in 10 CFR Part 73. Facilities licensed under 10 CFR Part 50 are included in the scope of 10 CFR Part 73. Paragraph 73.55(a) specifies the general performance objectives and requirements of an onsite physical protection system and security organization, and paragraphs 73.55(b) through 73.55(h) specify minimum