

[Docket No. 50-414]

Duke Power Co., et al; Catawba Nuclear Station, Unit No. 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 10 CFR part 50, appendix J, Paragraph III.D.1.(a), Type A Tests, to Duke Power Company, et al. (the licensee), for operation of the Catawba Nuclear Station, Unit No. 2, located in York County, South Carolina, in accordance with Facility Operating License No. NFP-35.

Environmental Assessment

Identification of the Proposed Action

This Environmental Assessment has been prepared to address potential environmental issues related to the licensee's application dated May 18, 1995, as supplemented by letter dated May 31, 1995. The proposed action would exempt the licensee from the requirements of 10 CFR part 50, appendix J, Paragraph III.D.1.(a), to the extent that a one-time schedular extension would permit rescheduling the third containment integrated leak rate test (ILRT) in the first 10-year service period from the end-of-cycle 7 outage until the end-of-cycle 8 outage. The requested exemption would also allow the decoupling of this third test from the endpoint of the first 10-year inservice inspection.

The Need for the Proposed Action

The current containment integrated leakage rate requirement for Catawba, Unit 2, pursuant to Appendix J, is that, after the preoperational leak rate preoperational leak rate test, a set of three Type A tests must be performed at approximately equal intervals during each 10-year period. Also, the third test of each set must be conducted when the plant is shut down for the 10-year plant inservice inspection. This is reflected in the Catawba Technical Specifications (TS) as a testing interval of once each 40 months plus or minus 10 months, for a frequency of three times in a 120-month period. To date, for Catawba Unit 2, the preoperational and the first two periodic ILRTs have been conducted. The most recent ILRT was conducted in February 1993, approximately 28 months ago. Thus, in accordance with appendix J and the current TS, an ILRT would have to be conducted during the refueling outage beginning in October 1995 (the end-of-cycle (EOC) 7 outage).

The licensee has requested an exemption from Appendix J and a corresponding change to the TS that would allow a one-time change to the interval for the Unit 2 ILRT from 40 plus or minus 10 months to less than or equal to 70 months. This would allow the EOC-7 ILRT to be rescheduled for EOC-8. Therefore, the need for the licensee's proposed action is to allow a longer interval between the Catawba Unit 2 second and third periodic Type A ILRTs, which will result in a cost savings to the licensee.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action

The proposed one-time exemption would not increase the probability or consequences of accidents previously analyzed and the proposed one-time exemption would not affect facility radiation levels or facility radiological effluents. The licensee has analyzed the results of previous Type A tests performed at the Catawba Nuclear Station, Unit No. 2. The licensee has provided an acceptable basis for concluding that the proposed one-time extension of the Type A test interval would maintain the containment leakage rates within acceptable limits. Accordingly, the Commission has concluded that the one-time extension does not result in a significant increase in the amounts of any effluents that may be released nor does it result in a significant increase in individual or cumulative occupational radiation exposure. Therefore, there are no significant radiological environmental impacts associated with the proposed exemption.

With regard to potential nonradiological impacts, the proposed exemption only involves Type A testing on the containment. 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 exemption.

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 Catawba Nuclear Station Units 1 and 2," dated January 1983.

Agencies and Persons Consulted

In accordance with its stated policy, on June 6, 1995, the NRC staff consulted with the South Carolina State official, Mr. M.K. Batavia, PE, Chief of the Bureau of Radiological Health, Department of Health and Environmental controls, 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 May 18, 1995, as supplemented by letter dated May 31, 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 York County Library, 138 East Black Street, Rock Hill, South Carolina.

Dated at Rockville, MD this 15th day of June 1995.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Herbert N. Berkow,

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Availability of Draft Application Format and Content Guidance and Review Plan and Acceptance Criteria for Non-Power Reactors

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is in the process of developing for Non-Power Reactors (NPRs) a "Format and Content for Applications for the Licensing of Non-Power Reactors" (F&C) and a "Standard Review Plan and Acceptance Criteria for Applications for the Licensing of Non-Power Reactors" (SRP). The NRC has made available a draft of Chapter 15, "Financial Qualifications," of the F&C and SRP documents for comment. Other