

Agencies and Persons Consulted

In accordance with its stated policy, on July 5, 1995, the staff consulted with the Georgia State official, Mr. James Hardeman of the Environmental Protection Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, 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 letters dated May 12, 1995, and July 6, 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 Burke County Library, 412 Fourth Street, Waynesboro, Georgia.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 21st day of August 1995.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Herbert N. Berkow,

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

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[Docket Nos. 50-413 and 50-414]

Duke Power Company, et al.; Catawba Nuclear Station, Unit Nos. 1 and 2; Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) is considering issuance of amendments to Facility Operating License Nos. NPF-35 and NPF-52, issued to Duke Power Company, et al. (the licensee), for operation of the Catawba Nuclear Station, Units 1 and 2, located in York County, South Carolina.

Environmental Assessment*Identification of the Proposed Action*

The proposed action would revise Technical Specification (TS) 5.3.1 "Fuel Assemblies" to (a) allow an increase in the maximum specified enrichment for fuel assemblies from a nominal value of 4.0 to 5.0 weight percent Uranium-235, and (b) provide flexibility in the repair of fuel assemblies containing damaged

and leaking fuel rods by reconstituting the assemblies in accordance with the guidance in Generic Letter 90-02, Supplement 1, "Alternative Requirements For Fuel Assemblies In The Design Features Section of Technical Specifications." The application is also generally consistent with the format and content of the improved Standard TS for Westinghouse plants provided in NUREG-1431, "Standard Technical Specifications Westinghouse Plants."

The proposed action is in accordance with the licensee's application for amendments dated June 17, 1993, as supplemented by letter dated July 5, 1995.

The Need for the Proposed Action

The proposed action is needed so that the licensee can use higher fuel enrichment to provide additional flexibility in the licensee's reload design efforts and to provide flexibility in the reconstitution of fuel assemblies that are found to be leaking or are determined to be probable sources of future leakage.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action

The Commission has completed its evaluation of the proposed revisions to the TS. The proposed revisions would permit storage of fuel enriched to a nominal 5.0 weight percent Uranium-235. The safety considerations associated with storing new and spent fuel of a higher enrichment have been evaluated by the NRC staff. The staff has concluded that such changes would not adversely affect plant safety. The 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 contributions 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). Accordingly, the Commission concludes that there are no significant radiological environmental impacts associated with the proposed amendments.

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 this action would be to deny the requested amendments. 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 July 21, 1995, the NRC staff consulted with the South Carolina State official, Mr. V. Autrey 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 license amendments.

For further details with respect to this action, see the licensee's letter dated June 17, 1993, as supplemented by letter dated July 5, 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, Maryland, this 21st day of August 1995.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Herbert N. Berkow,

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

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[Docket No. 50-293]

Boston Edison Company (Pilgrim Nuclear Power Station); Exemption

I

The Boston Edison Company (BECO/ licensee) is the holder of Facility Operating License No. DPR-35, which authorizes operation of the Pilgrim Nuclear Power Station (the facility). The license provides, among other things, that the facilities are subject to all the rules, regulations, and orders of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) now or hereafter in effect.

The facility is a boiling-water reactor located at the licensee's site in Plymouth, Massachusetts.

II

The Code of Federal Regulations at 10 CFR 73.55, "Requirements for physical protection of licensed activities in nuclear power reactors against radiological sabotage," paragraph (a), in part, states that "the licensee shall establish and maintain an onsite physical protection system and security organization which will have as its objective to provide high assurance that activities involving special nuclear material are not inimical to the common defense and security and do not constitute an unreasonable risk to the public health and safety."

The Code of Federal Regulations at 10 CFR 73.55(d), "Access Requirements," paragraph (1), specifies that, "the licensee shall control all points of personnel and vehicle access into a protected area." The Code of Federal Regulations at 10 CFR 73.55(d)(5) also requires that, "A numbered picture badge identification system shall be used for all individuals who are authorized access to protected areas without escort." It further states that individuals not employed by the licensee (e.g., contractors) may be authorized access to protected areas without escort provided that the individual, "receives a picture badge upon entrance into a protected area

which must be returned upon exit from the protected area. . . ."

The licensee proposes to implement an alternative unescorted access system which would eliminate the need to issue and retrieve picture badges at the entrance/exit location to the protected area and would allow all individuals, including contractors, to keep their picture badges in their possession when departing the Pilgrim site.

By letter dated June 21, 1995, the licensee requested an exemption from certain requirements of 10 CFR 73.55(d)(5). Specifically, the requested exemption would allow contractors who have unescorted access to retain possession of their picture badges instead of returning them as they exit the protected area.

III

Pursuant to 10 CFR 73.55, "Specific exemptions," the Commission may upon application of any interested person or upon its own initiative, grant such exemption in this part as it determines are authorized by law and will not endanger life or property or the common defense and security, and are otherwise in the public interest. The Code of Federal Regulations at 10 CFR 73.55 allows the Commission to authorize a licensee to provide alternative measures for protection against radiological sabotage provided the licensee demonstrates that the alternative measures have the same "high assurance" objective, that the proposed measures meet the general performance requirements of the regulation, and that the overall level of system performance provides protection against radiological sabotage equivalent to that which would be provided by the regulation.

Currently, unescorted access into the protected area for both employee and contractor personnel into the Pilgrim Nuclear Power Station is controlled through the use of picture badges. Positive identification of personnel which are authorized and request access into the protected area is established by security personnel making a visual comparison of the individual requesting access and that individual's picture badge. In accordance with 10 CFR 73.55(d)(5), contractor personnel are not allowed to take their picture badges offsite. In addition, in accordance with the plant's physical security plan, the licensee's employees are also not allowed to take their picture badges offsite.

The proposed system will require that all individuals with authorized unescorted access have the physical characteristics of their hand (hand

geometry) registered with their picture badge number in a computerized access control system. Therefore, all authorized individuals must not only have their picture badge to gain access to the protected area, but must also have their hand geometry confirmed. All individuals, including contractors, who have authorized unescorted access into the protected area will be allowed to keep their picture badges in their possession when departing the Pilgrim site.

All other access processes, including search function capability and access revocation, will remain the same. A security officer responsible for access control will continue to be positioned within a bullet-resistant structure. It should also be noted that the proposed system is only for individuals with authorized unescorted access and will not be used for those individuals requiring escorts.

Sandia National Laboratories conducted testing which demonstrated that the hand geometry equipment possesses strong performance characteristics. Details of the testing performed are in the Sandia report, "A Performance Evaluation of Biometric Identification Devices," SAND91-0276 UC-906 Unlimited Release, June 1991. Based on the Sandia report and the licensee's experience using the current photo picture identification system, the false acceptance rate for the proposed hand geometry system would be at least equivalent to that of the current system. To assure that the proposed system will continue to meet the general performance requirements of 10 CFR 73.55(d)(5), the licensee will implement a process for testing the system. The site security plans will also be revised to allow implementation of the hand geometry system and to allow employees and contractors with unescorted access to keep their picture badges in their possession when leaving the Pilgrim site.

IV

For the foregoing reasons, the NRC staff has determined that the proposed alternative measures for protection against radiological sabotage meet the same high assurance objective and the general performance requirements of 10 CFR 73.55. In addition, the staff has determined that the overall level of the proposed system's performance will provide protection against radiological sabotage equivalent to that which is provided by the current system in accordance with 10 CFR 73.55.

Accordingly, the Commission has determined that, pursuant to 10 CFR 73.55, this exemption is authorized by