

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[Docket Nos. 50-277 and 50-278]

Peco Energy Company Peach Bottom Atomic Power Station, Unit Nos. 2 and 3; Issuance of Final Director's Decision Under 10 CFR 2.206

Notice is hereby given that the Director, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) has denied in part a Petition, dated October 6, 1994, submitted by the Maryland Safe Energy Coalition (Petitioner). The Petition requested that the NRC take action regarding the Peach Bottom Atomic Power Station, Unit Nos. 2 and 3 (PBAPS). The Petition consisted of a press release which was reviewed by the NRC pursuant to 10 CFR 2.206.

The October 6, 1994, Petition requests the NRC to immediately shut down both reactors at Peach Bottom and keep them shut down until certain conditions are corrected. Specifically, the Petitioner stated that (1) the risk of fire near electrical control cables due to combustible insulation could cause a catastrophic meltdown; (2) cracks were discovered in the structural support (core shroud) of the reactor fuel in Peach Bottom Unit 3, indicating possible cracks in other parts of the reactor vessel; (3) the NRC discovered that both reactors had no emergency cooling water for an hour on August 3, 1994; and (4) other chronic problems exist at Peach Bottom according to an August 16, 1994, NRC report. The Petitioner also indicated his support for the demands from the Nuclear Information Resource Service that (a) all safety class component parts in both reactor vessels, including the cooling system, the heat transfer system, and the reactor core, be inspected and (b) the Peach Bottom operating license be suspended until an analysis of the synergistic effects of cracks in multiple parts is conducted (incorporated into Request 2).

The Director of the Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation has denied Requests (2), (3) and (4) of the October 6, 1994, Petition. The reasons for this denial are explained in the "Final Director's Decision Under 10 CFR 2.206" (DD-96-05), the complete text of which is published elsewhere in this separate part of the Federal Register, and 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 for the Peach Bottom Atomic Power Station located at the State Library of Pennsylvania,

(REGIONAL DEPOSITORY) Government Publications Section, Education Building, Walnut Street and Commonwealth Avenue, Box 1601, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, 17105. A Director's Decision denying Request (1) of the October 6, 1994 Petition was issued under separate cover on April 3, 1996 (Director's Decision DD-96-03).

A copy of this Final Director's Decision will be filed with the Secretary of the Commission for review in accordance with 10 CFR 2.206(c). As provided in that regulation, the Decision will constitute the final action of the Commission 25 days after the date of the issuance of the Decision, unless the Commission, on its own motion, institutes a review of the Decision within that time.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 10th day of June 1996.

William T. Russell,

Director, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation.

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[Docket Nos. 50-277 and 50-278 (10 CFR 2.206)]

PECO Energy Company, (Peach Bottom Atomic Power Station, Unit Nos. 2 and 3; Final Director's Decision Under 10 CFR 2.206

I. Introduction

On October 6, 1994, the Maryland Safe Energy Coalition (Petitioner) issued a press release describing its concerns with the operation of PECO Energy Company's Peach Bottom Atomic Power Station (PBAPS). In the press release, the Petitioner requested that the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) take action to address those concerns. The Petitioner requested the NRC, among other things, to immediately shut down both reactors at Peach Bottom and keep them shut down until certain conditions are corrected. Specifically, the Petitioner stated that (1) the risk of fire near electrical control cables due to combustible insulation could cause a catastrophic meltdown; (2) cracks were discovered in the structural support (core shroud) of the reactor fuel in Peach Bottom Unit 3, indicating possible cracks in other parts of the reactor vessel; (3) the NRC discovered that both reactors had no emergency cooling water for an hour on August 3, 1994; and (4) other chronic problems exist at Peach Bottom according to an August 16, 1994, NRC report.

The Petitioner seeks relief from the risk of fire (Request 1) due to cable insulation on the basis of a September 30, 1994, article in the Baltimore Sun that described the indictment of Thermal Sciences, Inc., on charges of falsifying laboratory records related to Thermo-Lag. Thermo-Lag is a material used to insulate electrical cables and other equipment from fire damage. The Petition states that a fire in combustible insulation near electrical control cables could cause a catastrophic meltdown.

The Petition also seeks the correction of cracks that were discovered in the structural support (core shroud) of the reactor fuel in Peach Bottom Unit 3, indicating possible cracks in other parts of the reactor vessel (Request 2). In support of this request, the Petitioner also references an earlier demand by the Nuclear Information and Resource Service (NIRS)¹ that all safety class component parts in both reactor vessels, including the cooling system, the heat transfer system, and the reactor core, be inspected and that an analysis be conducted of the synergistic effects of cracks in multiple parts. The Maryland Safe Energy Coalition did not, however, provide any information to support the application of the NIRS Petition to PBAPS.

The Petitioner also raises equipment problems at PBAPS, stating that: (a) the NRC discovered both reactors at PBAPS had no emergency cooling water for approximately one hour on August 3,

¹ On September 19, 1994, NIRS sought relief, pursuant to 10 CFR 2.206, regarding safety class reactor internal components at Oyster Creek Nuclear Generating Station (OCNGS) on the following premises: (a) the core shroud in General Electric boiling water-reactors (BWRs) is vulnerable to age-related deterioration; (b) 12 domestic and foreign BWR owners have found extensive cracking on welds of the core shroud; (c) only 10 of 36 U.S. BWR owners have inspected their core shrouds and 9 of the 10 core shrouds had cracks at the time of the NIRS Petition; (d) 19 of 25 selected BWR internal components are susceptible to stress corrosion cracking and 6 of 19 are susceptible to irradiation-assisted stress corrosion cracking; (e) as the oldest operating General Electric Mark I BWR and the third oldest operating reactor in the United States, OCNGS has been subjected for the longest period to operational conditions that cause embrittlement and cracking; (f) according to the BWR Owners Group (BWROG), cracking of the core shroud is a warning signal that additional safety class reactor internals are increasingly susceptible to age-related deterioration; (g) cracking of any single part or multiple components jeopardizes safe operation of that nuclear station; (h) Oyster Creek did not inspect for core shroud cracking prior to the current refueling outage and other safety-class reactor internals have not been adequately inspected for cracking; and (i) a safety analysis has not been performed on the potential synergistic effects of multiple-component cracking. The relief sought in the Petition based upon these concerns was denied in a Partial Director's Decision issued on August 4, 1995 (See *General Public Utilities Nuclear Corporation* (Oyster Creek Nuclear generating Station), DD-95-18, 42 NRC 67 (1995)).