[Docket No. 50–72]

Enviromental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact Regarding Issuance of a Specific Exemption to the Requirements of 10 CFR 50.82(b)(6)(ii) University of Utah AGN–201 Research Reactor

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is considering granting, upon its own initiative, a specific exemption in accordance with 10 CFR 50.12 to the part of the requirements of 10 CFR 50.82(b)(6)(ii) that requires a terminal radiation survey and associated documentation to demonstrate that the site is suitable for release as a condition of license termination for Amended Facility Operating License No. R–25 for the University of Utah (the licensee) AGN–201 Research Reactor (AGN–201) located on the licensee's campus in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Environmental Assessment

Identification of Proposed Action

By application dated July 17, 1990, as supplemented on July 18, 1990, and June 12, 1991, the licensee requested authorization to dismantle the AGN–201, dispose of its component parts in accordance with the proposed decommissioning plan, and terminate Amended Facility Operating License No. R–25. Following an ''Order Authorizing Dismantling of Facility and Disposition of Component Parts,'' dated August 1, 1991, (56 FR 37733), the licensee completed the dismantlement and submitted a final survey report dated April 13, 1994, as supplemented on March 17 and 22, 1995, and February 6, 1996. Representatives of the Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education (ORISE), under contract to NRC, conducted a survey of the reactor on April 9, 1996. The survey is documented in an ORISE report, ''Radiological Survey of the University of Utah AGN–201M Research Reactor, Salt Lake City, Utah,'' dated June 1996. In a memorandum dated July 15, 1996, NRC Region IV found that the ORISE report findings support the data developed in the licensee's final survey report.

Because the AGN–201 is in the same room as the TRIGA Research Reactor (Docket No. 50–407, Facility Operating License No. R–126) that the University continues to operate, the Reactor Room of the Merrill Engineering Building will continue to be subject to the terms of the TRIGA license. The Reactor Room will be considered for release by NRC as part of the request to terminate the TRIGA license at some time in the future. Because the site will continue to be used under a NRC license and will be surveyed in the future, and because application of the regulation is not necessary to achieve the underlying purpose of the rule, the NRC is considering granting, upon its own initiative, a specific exemption in accordance with 10 CFR 50.12 to the part of the requirements of 10 CFR 50.82(b)(6)(ii) that requires a terminal radiation survey and associated documentation to demonstrate that the site is suitable for release as a condition for license termination.

The Need for Proposed Action

The exemption is needed for termination of Amended Facility Operating License No. R–25.

Environmental Impact of Granting of Exemption

The licensee indicates that the residual contamination and dose exposures comply with the criteria of Regulatory Guide 1.86, Table 1, which establish acceptable residual surface contamination levels, and the exposure limit, established by the NRC staff, of less than 5 micro rem/hr above background at 1 meter. These measurements have been verified by the NRC staff. The NRC finds that since these criteria have been met, there is no significant impact on the environment and the reactor components can be released for unrestricted use and the license terminated. Because the site will continue to be used under an NRC license, granting the exemption will have no effect on the status of the site and, thus, no significant impact on the environment.

Alternatives to the Proposed Action

As an alternative to the proposed action, the staff considered denying the proposed action. Not granting the exemption would result in no change in current environmental impacts and would require continuance of the Amended Facility Operating License No. R–25. The environmental impacts of the proposed action and of the alternative action are similar. Since the contaminated and activated reactor and component parts already have been dismantled and disposed of in accordance with NRC regulations and guidelines, there is no alternative with less environmental impact than the granting of the exemption and termination of Amended Facility Operating License No. R–25.

Agencies and Persons Consulted

The staff consulted with personnel from ORISE (an NRC contractor), who conducted the confirmatory survey for the AGN–201. The staff also consulted with the Utah State official regarding the environmental impact of the proposed action. The State official had no comments.

Finding of No Significant Impact

The NRC has determined not to prepare an environmental impact statement for the proposed action. On the basis of the foregoing environmental assessment, the NRC has concluded that the granting of the exemption will have no significant effect on the quality of the human environment.

For further details with respect to this proposed action, see the application for termination of Amended Facility Operating License No. R–25, dated July 17, 1990, as supplemented. These documents are available for public inspection at the Commission's Public Document Room, 2120 L Street, NW., Washington, DC. 20037.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 6th day of March 1997.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Seymour H. Weiss,

Director, Non-Power Reactors and Decommissioning Project Directorate Division of Reactor Program Management, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation.

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Notice of Availability of Memorandum of Understanding Between the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and the Department of Energy Concerning Agency Cooperation on Projects and Activities

SUMMARY: On January 15, 1997, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) and the Department of Energy (DOE) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to provide a basis for agency cooperation on significant projects and activities. The MOU establishes cooperative long-range planning, and encourages the development of specific MOUs to support NRC involvement when a joint effort on a project or activity is desirable.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Amy L. Bryce, Special Projects Branch, Division of Fuel Cycle Safety and Safeguards, Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555, (301) 415–5848.