environmental impacts associated with the proposed action.

Alternatives to the Proposed Action

Since the Commission has concluded that there is no 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 exemption, the staff considered denial of the requested exemption. Denial of the request 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 Statement Related to the St. Lucie Plant Unit No. 1,'' dated June 1973, and ''Final Environmental Statement Related to the Construction of St. Lucie Plant Unit No. 2,'' dated May 1974.

Agencies and Persons Consulted

In accordance with its stated policy, on July 16, 1997, the Commission staff consulted with Mr. William Passetti, Acting Chief of the Bureau of Radiation Control, Florida Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services, 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 action.

For further details with respect to the proposed action, see the licensee's letter dated February 19, 1997, and supplement dated July 10, 1997, which is available for public inspection at the Commission's Public Document Room, which is located at The Gelman Building, 2120 L Street, NW., Washington, DC, and at the local public document room located at the Indian River College Library, 3209 Virginia Avenue, Fort Pierce, Florida 34981–5599.

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

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

L.A. Wiens,

Senior Project Manager, Project Directorate II–3, Division of Reactor Projects—I/II, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation.

[FR Doc. 97–21359 Filed 8–12–97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7590–01–P

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[Docket Nos. 50–266 and 50–301]

Wisconsin Electric Power Company (Point Beach Nuclear Plant, Units 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 Licenses Nos. DPR–24 and DPR–27, issued to Wisconsin Electric Power Company, (the licensee), for operation of the Point Beach Nuclear Plant, Units 1 and 2, located in Manitowoc County, Wisconsin.

Environmental Assessment

Identification of the Proposed Action

By letter dated January 24, 1997, as supplemented by letter dated May 15, 1997, the licensee proposed to change the technical specifications (TSs) to allow an increase in fuel enrichment (Uranium 235, U–235) to 5.0 weight percent and to require the use of integral fuel burnable absorbers for assemblies with enrichments greater than 4.6 weight percent U–235. Point Beach TSs currently limit fuel in the spent fuel pool and new fuel storage racks to a maximum enrichment of 44.8 grams of U–235 per axial centimeter (approximately 4.0 weight percent of a standard fuel assembly and 46.8 grams of U–235 per axial centimeter (approximately 4.75 weight percent) of an Optimized Fuel Assembly (OFA).

The Need for the Proposed Action

The licensee intends, in the future, to use the more highly enriched fuel to support longer fuel cycles. Currently, TS 15.5.4 limits the enrichment of fuel assemblies stored in the spent fuel pool and new fuel storage racks. Before the licensee extends plant operating cycles, it plans on receiving shipments of 5.0 weight percent fuel. Thus, the change to the TSs was requested.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action

The Commission has completed its evaluation of the proposed revision to the TSs and concludes that storage and use of fuel enriched with U–235 up to 5.0 weight percent at Point Beach Nuclear Plant, Units 1 and 2 is acceptable. The safety considerations associated with higher enrichments were evaluated by the NRC staff and the staff concluded that such changes would not adversely affect plant safety.

The environmental impacts of transportation resulting from the use of higher enrichment are 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. This assessment was published in the **Federal Register** on August 11, 1988 (53 FR 30355), as corrected on August 24, 1988 (53 FR 32322) in connection with an Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact related to the Shearon Harris Nuclear Power Plant, Unit 1. As indicated therein, the environmental cost contribution of an increase in fuel enrichment of up to 5 weight percent U–235 and irradiation limits of up to 60 gigawatt days per metric ton (GWD/MT) 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). These findings are applicable to the proposed amendments for Point Beach Nuclear Plant, Units 1 and 2. Accordingly, the Commission concludes that this proposed action would result in no significant radiological environmental impact.

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, no changes are being made to the authorized power level, 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.

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. 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 Statement for the Point Beach Nuclear Plant, Units 1 and 2.

Agencies and Persons Consulted

In accordance with its stated policy, on July 29, 1997, the staff consulted with the Wisconsin State official, Ms. Sarah Jenkins of the Wisconsin Public Service Commission, 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 action.

For further details with respect to the proposed action, see the licensee's letter dated January 24, 1997, as supplemented by letter dated May 15, 1997, 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 Lester Public Library, 1001 Adams Street, Two Rivers, WI 54241.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 7th day of August 1997.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Linda L. Gundrum,

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

[FR Doc. 97–21360 Filed 8–12–97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7590–01–P

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Biweekly Notice

Applications and Amendments to Facility Operating LicensesInvolving No Significant Hazards Considerations

I. Background

Pursuant to Public Law 97-415, the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission or NRC staff) is publishing this regular biweekly notice. Public Law 97-415 revised section 189 of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended (the Act), to require the Commission to publish notice of any amendments issued, or proposed to be issued, under a new provision of section 189 of the Act. This provision grants the Commission the authority to issue and make immediately effective any amendment to an operating license upon a determination by the Commission that such amendment involves no significant hazards consideration, notwithstanding the pendency before the Commission of a request for a hearing from any person.

This biweekly notice includes all notices of amendments issued, or proposed to be issued from July 19, 1997, through August 1, 1997. The last biweekly notice was published on July 30, 1997, (62 FR 40843).

Notice Of Consideration Of Issuance Of Amendments To Facility Operating Licenses, Proposed No Significant Hazards Consideration Determination, And Opportunity For A Hearing

The Commission has made a proposed determination that the following amendment requests involve no significant hazards consideration. Under the Commission's regulations in 10 CFR 50.92, this means that operation of the facility in accordance with the proposed amendment would not (1) involve a significant increase in the probability or consequences of an accident previously evaluated; or (2) create the possibility of a new or different kind of accident from any accident previously evaluated; or (3) involve a significant reduction in a margin of safety. The basis for this proposed determination for each amendment request is shown below.

The Commission is seeking public comments on this proposed determination. Any comments received within 30 days after the date of publication of this notice will be considered in making any final determination.

Normally, the Commission will not issue the amendment until the expiration of the 30-day notice period. However, should circumstances change during the notice period such that failure to act in a timely way would result, for example, in derating or shutdown of the facility, the Commission may issue the license amendment before the expiration of the 30-day notice period, provided that its final determination is that the amendment involves no significant hazards consideration. The final determination will consider all public and State comments received before action is taken. Should the Commission take this action, it will publish in the **Federal Register** a notice of issuance and provide for opportunity for a hearing after issuance. The Commission expects that the need to take this action will occur very infrequently.

Written comments may be submitted by mail to the Chief, Rules Review and Directives Branch, Division of Freedom of Information and Publications Services, Office of Administration, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001, and should cite the publication date and page number of this **Federal Register** notice. Written comments may also be delivered to Room 6D22, Two White Flint North, 11545 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland from 7:30 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. Federal workdays. Copies of written comments received may be examined at the NRC Public Document Room, the Gelman Building, 2120 L Street, NW., Washington, DC. The filing of requests for a hearing and petitions for leave to intervene is discussed below.

By September 12, 1997, the licensee may file a request for a hearing with respect to issuance of the amendment to the subject facility operating license and any person whose interest may be affected by this proceeding and who wishes to participate as a party in the proceeding must file a written request for a hearing and a petition for leave to intervene. Requests for a hearing and a petition for leave to intervene shall be filed in accordance with the Commission's ''Rules of Practice for Domestic Licensing Proceedings'' in 10 CFR Part 2. Interested persons should consult a current copy of 10 CFR 2.714 which is available 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 particular facility involved. If a request for a hearing or petition for leave to intervene is filed by the above date, the Commission or an Atomic Safety and Licensing Board, designated by the Commission or by the Chairman of the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board Panel, will rule on the request and/or petition; and the Secretary or the designated Atomic Safety and Licensing Board will issue a notice of a hearing or an appropriate order.

As required by 10 CFR 2.714, a petition for leave to intervene shall set forth with particularity the interest of the petitioner in the proceeding, and how that interest may be affected by the results of the proceeding. The petition should specifically explain the reasons