also identify the specific aspect(s) of the subject matter of the proceeding as to which petitioner wishes to intervene. Any person who has filed a petition for leave to intervene or who has been admitted as a party may amend the petition without requesting leave of the Board up to two weeks prior to the first prehearing conference scheduled in the proceeding, but such an amended petition must satisfy the specificity requirements described above.

Not later than 15 days prior to the first prehearing conference scheduled in the proceeding, a petitioner shall file a supplement to the petition to intervene which must include a list of the contentions which are sought to be litigated in the matter. Each contention must consist of a specific statement of the issue of law or fact to be raised or controverted. In addition, the petitioner shall provide a brief explanation of the bases of the contention and a concise statement of the alleged facts or expert opinion which support the contention and on which the petitioner intends to rely in proving the contention at the hearing. The petitioner must also provide references to those specific sources and documents of which the petitioner is aware and on which the petitioner intends to rely to establish those facts or expert opinion. Petitioner must provide sufficient information to show that a genuine dispute exists with the applicant on a material issue of law or fact. Contentions shall be limited to matters within the scope of the amendment under consideration. The contention must be one which, if proven, would entitle the petitioner to relief. A petitioner who fails to file such a supplement which satisfies these requirements with respect to at least one contention will not be permitted to participate as a party.

Those permitted to intervene become parties to the proceeding, subject to any limitations in the order granting leave to intervene, and have the opportunity to participate fully in the conduct of the hearing, including the opportunity to present evidence and cross-examine witnesses.

If the amendment is issued before the expiration of the 30-day hearing period, the Commission will make a final determination on the issue of no significant hazards consideration. If a hearing is requested, the final determination will serve to decide when the hearing is held.

If the final determination is that the amendment request involves no significant hazards consideration, the Commission may issue the amendment and make it immediately effective, notwithstanding the request for a hearing. Any hearing held would take place after issuance of the amendment.

If the final determination is that the amendment request involves a significant hazards consideration, any hearing held would take place before the issuance of any amendment.

A request for a hearing or a petition for leave to intervene must be filed with the Secretary of the Commission, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555–0001, Attention: Rulemaking and Adjudications Staff, may be delivered to the Commission's Public Document Room, the Gelman Building, 2120 L Street, NW., Washington, DC, by the above date. A copy of the petition should also be sent to the Office of the General Counsel, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555–0001, and to M. J. Michael McGarry, III, Winston and Strawn, 1200 17th Street, NW., Washington, DC 20036, attorney for the licensee.

Nontimely filings of petitions for leave to intervene, amended petitions, supplemental petitions and/or requests for hearing will not be entertained absent a determination by the Commission, the presiding officer or the presiding Atomic Safety and Licensing Board that the petition and/or request should be granted based upon a balancing of the factors specified in 10 CFR 2.714(a)(1)(I)-(v) and 2.714(d).

For further details with respect to this action, see the application for amendments dated October 20, 1997, 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 located at the Oconee County Library, 501 West South Broad Street, Walhalla, South Carolina.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 22nd day of October 1997.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

David E. LaBarge,

Senior Project Manager, Project Directorate II–2, Division of Reactor Projects—I/II, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation.

[FR Doc. 97–28529 Filed 10–27–97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7590–01–P

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[Docket No. 50–416]

Entergy Operations, Inc., System Energy Resources, Inc., South Mississippi Electric Power Association, Entergy Mississippi, Inc.; Grand Gulf Nuclear Station, Unit 1; Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC or the Commission) is considering the issuance of an exemption to Facility Operating License No. NPF–29, which was issued to Entergy Operations, Inc. (the licensee), for operation of the Grand Gulf Nuclear Station, Unit 1, (GGNS) located in Claiborne County, Mississippi.

Environmental Assessment

Identification of the Proposed Action

The proposed action would exempt the licensee from the criticality monitoring requirement in 10 CFR 70.24(a), ''Criticality Accident Requirements,'' which requires a monitoring system that will energize clear audible alarms if accidental criticality occurs in each area in which special nuclear material (SNM) is handled, used, or stored. The proposed action is for monitoring the storage of SNM in the form of (1) not-in-use in-core nuclear instrumentation (e.g., source range monitors), which contain very small quantities of SNM, and (2) unirradiated fuel. For the unirradiated fuel, the exemption is requested for the unirradiated fuel that is packaged in accordance with 10 CFR Part 71, ''Packaging and Transportation of Radioactive Material,'' while the fuel is onsite and taken from the shipping trucks to the spent fuel pool area to be removed from the packaging, and the unirradiated fuel that is stored in the new fuel vault. The unirradiated fuel that would be stored in the spent fuel pool would have the required 70.24(a) criticality accident monitoring system.

The proposed action is in accordance with the licensee's application dated July 15, 1996, as supplemented by the letters dated March 7 and April 29, 1997.

The Need for the Proposed Action

The proposed action would allow the licensee an exemption from the requirement to provide criticality accident monitoring for the above two forms of SNM, listed in its application, while the forms are being stored at the site within the security fence in different plant areas (in-core nuclear

instrumentation), or in the new fuel vault (unirradiated fuel), or while the unirradiated fuel is being transferred from shipping trucks to the spent fuel pool area to be removed from the Part 71 packaging.

The licensee stated that compliance to the criticality accident monitoring system requirements of 10 CFR 70.24(a) would result in a considerable expenditure of resources to install, maintain and operate a criticality monitoring system for the storage of the two forms of SNM, and there should be no concern about criticality ever occurring with the two forms of SNM as they are being stored onsite. There is too small a quantity of SNM, in the form of very thin coatings, present in the nuclear instrumentation for criticality, and unirradiated fuel assemblies would only be removed from the NRC-approved (i.e., Part 71) packaging before being stored in the spent fuel pool where criticality monitors are in use, or in the new fuel vault where there are no criticality monitors.

In the new fuel vault, the unirradiated fuel would be stored in racks which are designed, as Safety Class 2 and Seismic Category I, to withstand all credible loadings to prevent damage and distortion of the racks, and to keep the subcriticality margin of at least 0.95 whether the vault is dry or flooded with water. The new fuel vault is in a concrete, Seismic Category I building that is designed to preclude the deleterious effects on the fuel by natural phenomena such as earthquakes, tornados, hurricanes, tornado missiles and floods.

The Part 71 package design ensures that a geometrically safe configuration for the fuel is maintained during transport, handling, storage and accident conditions, and precludes introduction of any moderating agents due to leak-tight construction, and; therefore, criticality is precluded due to the construction of the package and the storage configuration of the fuel in the package.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action

The Commission has completed its evaluation of the proposed action and concludes that there is no significant environmental impacts if the exemption is granted. Inadvertent or accidental criticality will be precluded through compliance with the Technical Specifications (TS), the design of the fuel storage racks providing geometric spacing of unirradiated fuel assemblies in their storage locations, and administrative controls imposed on fuel handling procedures and the in-core nuclear instrumentation. TS requirements specify reactivity limits for the fuel storage racks and minimum spacing between the fuel assemblies in the storage racks.

The proposed exemption to 10 CFR 70.24(a) does not affect the design or operation of the plant, does not involve any modifications to the plant or any increase in the licensed power for the plant, and will not create any new or unreviewed environmental impacts that were not considered in the Final Environmental Statement (FES) related to the operation of GGNS, NUREG–0777, dated September 1981. The proposed action will not increase the probability or consequences of any accidents. No changes are being made to any structure, system, or component in the plant, to how the plant is operated, in the types or amounts of any effluents that may be released offsite, and in the allowable individual or cumulative occupational radiation exposure for the plant. The amount of radioactive waste would not be changed by the proposed exemption. Accordingly, the Commission concludes that the proposed exemption would not result in any significant radiological impacts.

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 the 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 Actions

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 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 FES for the GGNS.

Agencies and Persons Consulted

In accordance with its stated policy, on October 20, 1997, the staff consulted with the Mississippi State official, Robert Goff of the Division of Radiological Health, State Board of Health, 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 letters dated July 15, 1996, March 7 and April 29, 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 Judge George W. Armstrong Library, 220 S. Commerce Street, Natchez, Mississippi 39120.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 21st day of October, 1997.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

David L. Wigginton,

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

[FR Doc. 97–28531 Filed 10–27–97; 8:45 am]

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NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION.

[Docket No. 40–1162]

Western Nuclear, Inc.; Final Finding of No Significant Impact; Notice of Opportunity for Hearing

SUMMARY: The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) proposes to amend NRC Source Material License SUA–56, issued to Western Nuclear, Inc. (WNI), by removing reference to the Day Loma uranium heap leach site. To document its review of the potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed action, the NRC staff prepared an Environmental Assessment in accordance with the requirements of 10 CFR Part 51. The conclusion of the Environmental Assessment is a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the proposed licensing action.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Robert D. Carlson of the Uranium Recovery Branch, Mail Stop TWFN 7–J9, Division of Waste Management, Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, D.C. 20555. Telephone 301/415–8165.