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Background

On August 16, 1995, the Commission published in the **Federal Register** a final policy statement on the Use of Probabilistic Risk Assessment Methods in Nuclear Regulatory Activities (60 FR 42622). The policy statement included the following policy regarding expanded NRC use of PRA:

- The use of PRA technology should be increased in all regulatory matters to the extent supported by the state of the art in PRA methods and data and in a manner that complements the NRC's deterministic approach and supports the NRC's traditional defense-in-depth philosophy.

- PRA and associated analyses (e.g., sensitivity studies, uncertainty analyses, and importance measures) should be used in regulatory matters, where practical within the bounds of the state of the art, to reduce unnecessary conservatism associated with current regulatory requirements, regulatory guides, license commitments, and staff practices. Where appropriate, PRA should be used to support proposals for additional regulatory requirements in accordance with 10 CFR 50.109 (Backfit Rule). Appropriate procedures for including PRA in the process for changing regulatory requirements should be developed and followed. It is, of course, understood that the intent of this policy is that existing rules and regulations shall be complied with unless these rules and regulations are revised.

- PRA evaluations in support of regulatory decisions should be as realistic as practicable and appropriate

supporting data should be publicly available for review.

- The Commission's safety goals for nuclear power plants and subsidiary numerical objectives are to be used with appropriate consideration of uncertainties in making regulatory judgments on the need for proposing and backfitting new generic requirements on nuclear power plant licensees.

It was the Commission's intent that implementation of this policy statement would improve the regulatory process in three areas:

1. Enhancement of safety decisionmaking by the use of PRA insights,
2. More efficient use of agency resources, and
3. Reduction in unnecessary burdens on licensees.

In parallel with the development of Commission policy on uses of risk assessment methods, the NRC developed an agency-wide implementation plan for application of probabilistic risk assessment insights within the regulatory process (SECY-95-079). This implementation plan included tasks to develop the series of regulatory guides that is the subject of this notice. In June 1997, the regulatory guides and SRP sections were issued in draft for public comment. A discussion of the comments received and their disposition, as well as SECY-95-079, may be obtained from the NRC Public Document Room at 2120 L Street NW., Washington, DC; the PDR's mailing address is Mail Stop LL-6, Washington, DC 20555; telephone (202) 634-3273; fax (202) 634-3343. (5 U.S.C. 552(a))

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 28th day of August 1998.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Margaret V. Federline,

Deputy Director, Office of Nuclear Regulatory Research.

[FR Doc. 98-24458 Filed 9-10-98; 8:45 am]

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NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Notice of Issuance of Final Design Approval and Final Safety Evaluation Report: Westinghouse Electric Company AP600 Standard Design

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission has issued a final design approval (FDA) to Westinghouse Electric Company for the AP600 standard design pursuant to 10 CFR Part 52, Appendix O. This FDA allows the AP600 standard design to be referenced in an application for a construction

permit or operating license under 10 CFR Part 50, or an application for a combined license under 10 CFR Part 52. In addition, the Commission has issued the Final Safety Evaluation Report (FSER) that supports issuance of the FDA.

Issuance of this FDA signifies completion of the technical review phase of the application for certification of the AP600 design under Subpart B of 10 CFR Part 52. The NRC staff performed its technical review of the AP600 Standard Safety Analysis Report, Probabilistic Risk Assessment, and Tier 1 Material in accordance with the standards for review of design certification applications set forth in 10 CFR 52.48 that were applicable and technically relevant to the AP600 design or were modified by the exemptions identified in Section 1.6 of the NRC's FSER (NUREG-1512).

On the basis of its evaluation and independent analyses, as described in the FSER, the NRC staff concludes that Westinghouse's application for design certification meets the applicable portions of 10 CFR 52.47 and the review standards set forth above. In addition, the AP600 design is ready for the rulemaking phase, subject to satisfactory completion of the Enclosure 2 AP600 design control document (DCD). Therefore, the NRC staff and Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards will utilize the AP600 DCD and will rely on it in the rulemaking phase of the design certification review process pursuant to 10 CFR 52.51.

A copy of the AP600 FSER and FDA have been placed in the NRC's Public Document Room, the Gelman Building, 2120 L Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037, for review and copying by interested persons.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 3rd day of September 1998.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Theodore R. Quay,

Director, Standardization Project Directorate, Division of Reactor Program Management, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation.

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PANAMA CANAL COMMISSION

Agency Information Collection Activities Under OMB Review

AGENCY: Panama Canal Commission

ACTION: Notice

SUMMARY: In compliance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (Pub. L. 104-13, 109 Stat. 163), the Panama Canal Commission hereby gives notice it