

Forms 740M, 741, and 741A, together with NUREG/BR-0006, the instructions for completing the forms, enables NRC to collect, retrieve, analyze as necessary, and submit the data to IAEA to fulfill its reporting responsibilities.

A copy of the final supporting statement may be viewed free of charge at the NRC Public Document Room, 2120 L Street, NW (lower level), Washington, DC. OMB clearance requests are available at the NRC worldwide web site (<http://www.nrc.gov/NRC/PUBLIC/OMB/index.html>). The document will be available on the NRC home page site for 60 days after the signature date of this notice.

Comments and questions should be directed to the OMB reviewer listed below by March 8, 1999. Comments received after this date will be considered if it is practical to do so, but assurance of consideration cannot be given to comments received after this date.

Erik Godwin, Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (3150-0135), NEOB-10202, Office of Management and Budget, Washington, DC 20503.

Comments can also be submitted by telephone at (202) 395-3084.

The NRC Clearance Officer is Brenda Jo. Shelton, 301-415-7233.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 29th day of January 1999.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Brenda Jo. Shelton,

NRC Clearance Officer, Office of the Chief Information Officer.

[FR Doc. 99-2630 Filed 2-3-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7590-01-P

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[Docket No. 70-143]

Consideration of License Renewal Request for Nuclear Fuel Services, Inc.

AGENCY: U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

ACTION: Finding of no significant impact for the renewal of license for Nuclear Fuel Services, Inc. Facility in Erwin, Tennessee.

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission is considering the renewal of Special Nuclear Material License SNM-124 to authorize processing of highly enriched uranium (HEU) into a classified fuel product for the U.S. Naval Reactor Program, processing of HEU scrap to recover uranium, and various decommissioning activities at the Nuclear Fuel Services, Inc. (NFS) facility located in Erwin, Tennessee.

Summary of the Environmental Assessment

Identification of the Proposed Action

The proposed action is to renew License No. SNM-124, so as to continue operations and to perform certain decommissioning activities at the NFS Erwin Plant. The principal operations expected during the renewal period include the processing of HEU into a classified fuel product and processing HEU scrap to recover uranium, as well as support operations. The principal decommissioning activities expected during the renewal period include excavation, sampling, segregation, packaging, and offsite disposal of radioactive materials from two burial areas, the North Site Radiological Burial Ground and the Southwest Burial Trenches.

Impacts from final decommissioning of the North Site to meet unrestricted release criteria are also included in the Environmental Assessment (EA). The North Site refers to all NFS property north of the manufacturing facilities and covers approximately 10 hectares (24 acres). However, NRC approval of these activities will be considered as a separate licensing action.

In addition to the Proposed Alternative, a No-action Alternative was also assessed. Under this alternative, HEU production and scrap recovery operations would not be authorized. Instead, the license for the NFS plant would be renewed to only allow ongoing decommissioning activities. Eventually NFS would be required to initiate final decommissioning of the entire site. These decommissioning operations would be conducted in accordance with an approved decommissioning plan prepared by NFS after a thorough site survey. The NRC would assess the environmental impacts of site-wide decommissioning activities during review of this plan.

Need for the Proposed Action

The NFS Erwin Plant provides unique fuel material fabrication and uranium recovery services for the United States. NFS is the sole fabricator of classified fuel material for the United States Naval Reactor Program and is also involved in U.S. Department of Energy uranium recovery projects.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action

Normal Operations

Normal operations will involve discharges to the atmosphere and to surface water. Radionuclides that may be released include isotopes of the

actinide elements uranium, thorium, plutonium, and americium and lesser amounts of fission products, including technetium. Sources of releases to the atmosphere are the main plant stack, secondary stacks in process buildings, and fugitive dust emissions from decommissioning/remediation activities. Sources of releases to surface water include the waste water treatment system, the secondary cooling system, and the sanitary sewer system.

A dose assessment was performed to estimate the impact from radiological releases to the air. Atmospheric release exposure pathways included inhalation, ingestion of contaminated crops and resuspended dirt, and external exposure to the airborne plume and contaminated ground. For these atmospheric releases, the largest tissue dose is to the lung from inhalation of ^{234}U , with minor contribution from the crop ingestion and external-exposure pathways. For the maximally exposed individual, the committed effective dose equivalent (CEDE) for combined releases from production operations and decommissioning/remediation activities was estimated as 2.7×10^{-5} Sv/yr (2.7 mrem/yr). Doses from remediation activities are about an order of magnitude less than doses from production activities.

A dose assessment was also performed to estimate the impact from radiological releases to surface water. Liquid effluents are released directly or indirectly into the Nolichucky River. Small creeks receiving portions of the liquid discharge, Banner Spring Branch and Martin Creek, are not used as a drinking water supply for area residents. The analysis assumes that an individual along the Nolichucky River and the surrounding population out to a distance of 80 kilometers (50 miles) use this potentially contaminated water. Liquid-release exposure pathways included ingestion of drinking water, fish, and irrigated crops and external exposure during recreational activities. The largest tissue doses are to the bone surface from ingestion of thorium-232, and external doses are a factor of 2500 smaller than internal doses. Fish, crop, and drinking-water consumption account for 49, 37, and 14 percent of the dose, respectively. The CEDE for the maximally exposed individual was estimated as 9.7×10^{-7} Sv/yr (0.10 mrem/yr).

Under the proposed action, about 2874 shipments of contaminated soil would be transported offsite to the Envirocare disposal facility in Utah. The reference value used for estimating radiological exposure to the public from transporting contaminated soil from a

uranium fuel fabrication plant is 8.00×10^{-6} person-rem per shipment. Multiplying this dose rate by the number of waste shipments yields 23 person-mrem. Thus, a small fraction of one person-rem would be received by the public from transporting waste offsite.

NRC regulations in 10 CFR 20.1301(a)(1) require that the total effective dose equivalent (TEDE) for members of the public not exceed 1.0×10^{-3} Sv (100 mrem) per year. In addition, 10 CFR 20.1101(d) requires licensees to implement a constraint on atmospheric releases other than radon such that an individual member of the public will not be expected to receive a dose in excess of 1×10^{-4} Sv (10 mrem)/yr from these releases. Although not applicable to the NFS Erwin Plant because it does not process uranium for the production of electric power, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulations (40 CFR 190) require that for routine releases, the annual dose equivalent for all pathways not exceed 2.5×10^{-4} Sv (25 mrem) to the whole body, 7.5×10^{-4} Sv (75 mrem) to the thyroid, and 2.5×10^{-4} Sv (25 mrem) to any other organ. Doses related to NFS Erwin Plant operations are dominated by releases to the atmosphere. For the maximally exposed individual, the annual TEDE was estimated as 2.7×10^{-5} Sv (2.7 mrem), well within the limits established by NRC and EPA. The largest annual tissue dose was estimated as 2.1×10^{-4} Sv (21 mrem) to the lung. Although this tissue dose approaches the 40 CFR 190 limit, it is based on conservative estimates of atmospheric dispersion and of releases from process vents to bound all possible activities. The actual impacts are expected to be less than these estimates. The estimated dose from all other releases are small fractions of applicable limits.

The impact analysis considers individuals living near the plant and the surrounding population out to a distance of 80 kilometers (50 miles). The total population dose (about 0.4 per-Sv/yr) is a small addition to a background dose for the affected population of 950,000, which is approximately 1000 per-Sv/yr.

Impacts from releases of non-radiological contaminants to air, surface water, and groundwater were also assessed. Air quality is protected by enforcing emission limits and the maintenance of pollution control equipment, as required under several operating permits issued by the Tennessee Air Pollution Control Board, Department of Environment and Conservation. The primary nonradiological emissions are expected

to include volatile organic compounds, carbon monoxide, and nitrogen oxides. Normal emissions of gaseous effluents from process stacks are not expected to have a significant impact on offsite nonradiological air quality, because the estimated concentrations at the nearest site boundary are two to three orders of magnitude less than the most stringent State of Tennessee primary air-quality standards. The emission rate reported for hydrogen fluoride (HF) is estimated to result in a concentration that is at least 50 to 60 percent less than the most stringent State of Tennessee standard.

Several chemical contaminants have been detected in Banner Spring Branch at levels which exceed site-specific criteria. NFS has proposed the removal of contaminated soils, sediments, and piping, which are believed to be the source of the contamination. In addition, NFS will routinely monitor Banner Spring Branch for cyanide and zinc as recommended in the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act Facility Investigation Report for Areas of Concern #2 (Building 111 boiler blowdown and backwash water) and #4 (storm sewer system). No contamination of other surface waters due to plant activities has been identified.

Surface water quality is expected to be protected from future site activities by enforcing release limits and monitoring programs, as required under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit. Annual average concentrations of parameters regulated by the NPDES permit have generally been below discharge limits established for outfalls 001 and 002 from 1990 to 1996 when either production operations or decommissioning activities were being performed. Therefore, these parameters are expected to remain below the discharge limits during the license renewal period. Furthermore, discharges are not expected to have significant impact on the surface water quality in the Nolichucky River because of the dilution volume in the river.

Previous operation of the plant has resulted in localized chemical and radiological contamination of groundwater. Groundwater monitoring conducted by NFS indicates that plumes of uranium, tetrachloroethylene, trichloroethylene, 1,2-dichloroethylene, and vinyl chloride could migrate offsite in the direction of the Nolichucky River. To address this contamination, NFS has removed much of the source of the contamination through extensive remediation projects including excavation of contaminated areas in the North Site. In addition, NFS is currently engaged in decommissioning of the

Radiological Burial Ground and has proposed a final decommissioning plan for the entire North Site to remove more of the source term. NFS is also working with the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation and the Environmental Protection Agency to design remedial strategies and to investigate the offsite extent of these plumes.

Groundwater modeling conducted by NFS also indicates that contamination from the NFS site should not have an impact on local drinking water because contaminant plumes are not expected to intersect the capture zone for this water. However, NFS will be required by the NRC to continue routine groundwater monitoring to assess the nature and extent of groundwater contamination and will be required to conduct remediation, if necessary, to prevent offsite impacts to human health and safety.

If the license is renewed to allow both production operations and decommissioning/ remediation activities, approximately 39,100 cubic meters (1,380,000 cubic feet) of waste would be shipped offsite to Envirocare in Utah. Assuming that each waste shipment contains 13.6 cubic meters (480 cubic feet) of waste, 2874 shipments of soil would be transported to Envirocare. To estimate the number of fatalities from transporting waste, the fatal accident risk rate was multiplied by the distance traveled, where the distance traveled is the round trip between the facility and the disposal site. A fatal accident rate of 3.8×10^{-8} per kilometer (6.1×10^{-8} per mile) traveled was assumed. Multiplying this fatal accident rate by a round trip distance of 6560 kilometers (4100 miles) between the NFS plant in Erwin, Tennessee, and Envirocare in Clive, Utah, and the number of shipments yields a risk of less than one (0.72) fatality.

No impacts are expected on land use, biotic resources, or cultural resources. And a small positive socioeconomic impact is expected through the employment of 350 people at the site.

Accident Conditions

The handling, processing, and storage of material containing radioactive constituents at the NFS Erwin Plant could result in uncontrolled release of radioactive material to the environment from accidents. Therefore, the NRC staff conducted an accident analysis. A drop of contaminated dirt during remediation activities, failure of a high efficiency particulate air filter as a consequence of fire, and a generic criticality event were selected as representative accidents. The

TEDE to the maximally exposed individual from accidents involving a spill of contaminated soil or a facility fire were estimated to be less than 0.05 mSv (5 mrem), a small fraction of annual background exposure.

The prompt, external, and internal doses due to an inadvertent criticality were estimated to be 5.0×10^{-3} , 1.5×10^{-2} , and 2.6×10^{-1} Sv (0.5, 1.5, and 0.026 rem), respectively, for the maximally exposed nearest resident. Because two independent, concurrent failures must occur before initiation of a nuclear criticality, the possibility of such an event occurring is considered by the NRC staff to be extremely low. Therefore, the overall risk from such an accident is acceptable.

Agencies and Persons Consulted

The State of Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) was contacted concerning renewal of the NFS license. DEC had not identified any environmental issues associated with renewal and did not object to renewal.

Conclusion

The NRC has determined that the issuance of the renewal to allow NFS to process HEU into a classified fuel product, to process HEU scrap to recover uranium, and to conduct specified decommissioning activities will not result in significant impact to human health or the environment.

Finding of No Significant Impact

The Commission has prepared an Environmental Assessment related to the renewal of Special Nuclear Material License SNM-124. On the basis of the Assessment, the Commission has concluded that the environmental impacts associated with the proposed action would not be significant and do not warrant the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement. Accordingly, it has been determined that a Finding Of No Significant Impact is appropriate.

The Environmental Assessment and the documents related to this proposed action are available for public inspection and copying at the Commission's Public Document Room at the Gelman Building, 2120 L Street NW, Washington, DC.

The NRC contact for this licensing action is Thomas Cox. Mr. Cox may be contacted at (301) 415-8107 or thc@nrc.gov for more information.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 29th day of January 1999.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Charles W. Emeigh,

Acting Chief, Licensing Branch, Division of Fuel Cycle Safety and Safeguards, NMSS.

[FR Doc. 99-2628 Filed 2-3-99; 8:45 am]

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NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[Docket Nos. 50-498 and 50-499]

STP Nuclear Operating Company; Notice of Withdrawal of Application for Amendment to Facility Operating License

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) has granted the request of STP Nuclear Operating Company (the licensee) to withdraw its August 18, 1997, application for proposed amendment to Facility Operating Licenses Nos. NPF-76 and NPF-80 for the South Texas Project, Units 1 and 2, located in Matagorda County, Texas.

The proposed amendment would have revised Technical Specification 3.7.1.6, Atmospheric Steam Relief Valves, to ensure the automatic feature of the steam generator power operated relief valve remains operable during Modes 1 and 2. In addition, the proposed change would have added a surveillance requiring that a channel calibration on the steam generator power operated relief valve be performed every 18 months. Subsequently, by letter dated January 19, 1999, the licensee withdrew the amendment request.

The Commission had previously issued a Notice of Consideration of Issuance of Amendment published in the **Federal Register** on September 24, 1997 (62 FR 50007). However, by letter dated January 19, 1999, the licensee withdrew the proposed change.

For further details with respect to this action, see the application for amendment dated August 18, 1997, and the licensee's letter dated January 19, 1999, which withdrew the application for license amendment. The above documents 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 Wharton County Junior College, J.M. Hodges Learning Center,

911 Boling Highway, Wharton, TX 77488.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 29th day of January 1999.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Thomas W. Alexion,

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

[FR Doc. 99-2629 Filed 2-3-99; 8:45 am]

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NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Sunshine Act Meeting

AGENCY HOLDING THE MEETING: Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

DATE: Monday, February 9, 1999.

PLACE: Commissioners' Conference Room, 11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland.

STATUS: Public.

MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED:

Monday February 9

2:00 p.m.—Briefing on HLW Program Viability Assessment (Public Meeting)

3:30 p.m.—Briefing by Executive Branch—(Closed-ex. 4 & 9b)

*The schedule for Commission meetings is subject to change on short notice. To verify the status of meeting call (recording)—(301) 415-1292.

CONTACT PERSON FOR MORE INFORMATION: Bill Hill (301) 415-1661.

The NRC Commission Meeting Schedule can be found on the Internet at:

<http://www.nrc.gov/SECY/smj/schedule.htm>

This notice is distributed by mail to several hundred subscribers, if you no longer wish to receive it, or would like to be added to it, please contact the Office of the Secretary, Attn: Operations Branch, Washington, D.C. 20555 (301-415-1661). In addition, distribution of this meeting notice over the Internet system is available. If you are interested in receiving this Commission meeting schedule electronically, please send an electronic message to wmh@nrc.gov or dkw@nrc.gov.

Dated: February 1, 1999.

William M. Hill, Jr.,

SECY Tracking Officer, Office of the Secretary.

[FR Doc. 99-2745 Filed 2-2-99; 11:39 am]

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