

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[Docket Nos. STN 50-528, STN 50-529, and STN 50-530]

Arizona Public Service Company, Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station, Units 1, 2, and 3; Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) is considering issuance of an exemption from certain requirements of its regulations for Facility Operating License Nos. NPF-41, NPF-51, and NPF-74, for operation of the Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station (Palo Verde, or the licensee), Units 1, 2, and 3, located in Maricopa County, Arizona.

Environmental Assessment

Identification of the Proposed Action

The proposed action would exempt the licensee from the requirements of 10 CFR 50.71(e)(4) regarding submission of revisions to the Updated Final Safety Analysis Report (UFSAR). Under the proposed exemption, the licensee would submit revisions to the UFSAR, common to all three units, to the NRC no later than 24 calendar months from the previous revision. The licensee also requested that the exemption apply to (1) revisions made to the quality assurance program (which has been incorporated into the UFSAR) pursuant to 10 CFR 50.54(a)(3), (2) the safety evaluation summary reports for facility changes made under 10 CFR 50.59 pursuant to 10 CFR 50.59(b)(2), and (3) the reports of changes to the Technical Specification (TS) Bases.

The proposed action is in accordance with the licensee's application for exemption dated June 9, 1998, as supplemented by letter dated December 21, 1998.

The Need for the Proposed Action

The proposed action is needed to reduce undue regulatory burden for units that share a common UFSAR regarding the requirements of Section 50.71(e)(4). Section 50.71(e)(4) requires licensees to submit updates to their UFSAR annually or within 6 months after each refueling outage provided that the interval between successive updates does not exceed 24 months. Since all three Palo Verde units share a common UFSAR, the licensee must update the same document annually or within 6 months after a refueling outage for each unit. The underlying purpose of the rule was to relieve licensees of the burden of filing annual FSAR revisions while

assuring that such revisions are made at least every 24 months.

The Commission reduced the burden, in part, by permitting a licensee to submit its FSAR revisions 6 months after refueling outages for its facility, but did not provide in the rule for multiple unit facilities sharing a common FSAR. Rather, the Commission stated, "With respect to the concern about multiple facilities sharing a common FSAR, licensees will have maximum flexibility for scheduling updates on a case-by-case basis" (57 FR 39355). Allowing the exemption would maintain the UFSAR current within 24 months of the last revision. Submission of the quality assurance program changes and the 10 CFR 50.59 design change report with the UFSAR revision, as permitted by 10 CFR 50.54(a)(3) and 10 CFR 50.59(b)(2), respectively, also would not exceed a 24-month interval. In addition, submission of the TS Bases changes made in accordance with TS 5.5.14 would not exceed a 24-month interval.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action

The Commission has completed its evaluation of the proposed action and concludes that the proposed action is administrative in nature and unrelated to plant operations.

The proposed action 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, and there is no increase in occupational or public radiation exposure. Therefore, there are no significant radiological environmental impacts associated with the proposed action.

With regard to potential nonradiological impacts, the proposed action does not involve any historic sites. It does not affect nonradiological plant effluents and has no other environmental impacts. Therefore, there are no significant nonradiological environmental impacts associated with this action.

Accordingly, the Commission concludes that there are no significant environmental impacts associated with this action.

Alternative to the Proposed Action

As an alternative to the proposed action, the staff considered denial of the proposed action (i.e., the "no-action" alternative). 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

The proposed action does not involve the use of any resources not previously considered in the Final Environmental Statement Related to the Operation of Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station, Units 1, 2, and 3, dated February 1982 (NUREG-0841).

Agencies and Persons Contacted

In accordance with its stated policy, on May 13, 1999, the staff consulted with the Arizona State official, Mr. Audbry Godwin of the Arizona Radiation Protection Agency, regarding the environmental impact of the proposed action. The State official had no comments.

Finding of No Significant Impact

On the basis of 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 June 9, 1998, as supplemented by letter dated December 21, 1998, which are available for public inspection at the Commission's Public Document Room, Gelman Building, 2120 L Street, NW., Washington DC, and at the local public document room located at the Phoenix Public Library, 1221 N. Central Avenue, Phoenix, Arizona 85004.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland this 25th day of June 1999.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Mel B. Fields,

Project Manager, Section 2, Project Directorate IV & Decommissioning Division of Licensing Project Management, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation.

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OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

Proposed Collection; Comment Request for Clearance of a Revised Information Collection: RI 30-2 and RI 30-44

AGENCY: Office of Personnel Management.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (Pub. L. 104-13, May 22, 1995), this notice announces that the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) intends to submit to the Office of Management and Budget a