

the last issue, the Petitioner stated that the event on August 31, 1999, at Indian Point Unit 2 revealed potential problems with the plant-specific risk assessment developed by the licensee and now used to establish priorities for maintenance and inspections. Additionally, the Petitioner requested that a public hearing on this Petition be conducted in the vicinity of the plant before its restart is authorized by the NRC. In a transcribed telephone conversation between the Petitioner and the members of the NRC's Petition Review Board on September 22, 1999, the Petitioner clarified two of the issues in the Petition. First, the Petitioner stated that because of an apparent failure to accomplish the commitment in the NRC's safety evaluation for the license amendment mentioned in the Petition, the Petitioner was concerned that past licensing commitments may not have been implemented. Second, the Petitioner questioned whether the amount of time the licensee took to perform certain actions during the August 31 event was consistent with the times expected if a station blackout (SBO) had occurred since many of the procedures and processes in response to an SBO event were used.

As the basis for this request, the Petitioner states that the issues, if valid, have clear and direct safety implications because they involve equipment explicitly required to function to mitigate accidents. With regard to your IPE issue, the Petitioner states that, if valid, it has indirect safety implications because it involves information used by the plant's owner to schedule maintenance and inspections on equipment implicitly required to function to mitigate an accident. The Petitioner also stated that the specific problems revealed by the August 31 event were caused by systematic process breakdowns, including inadequate procedures, inadequate training, and plant configuration errors, and that the licensee's plan does not contain sufficient activities that provide reasonable assurance that problems in other safety systems are identified and corrected.

The request is being treated pursuant to 10 CFR 2.206 of the Commission's regulations. The request has been referred to the Director of the Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation. As provided by Section 2.206, appropriate action will be taken on this Petition within a reasonable time.

By letter dated October 8, 1999, the Director denied the Petitioner's request for immediate action at Indian Point Unit 2.

A copy of the petition is available for 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 White Plains Public Library, 100 Martine Avenue, White Plains, New York 10610.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 8th day of October 1999.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission,
Samuel J. Collins,
Director, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation.
 [FR Doc. 99-26942 Filed 10-14-99; 8:45 am]
 BILLING CODE 7590-01-P

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[Docket 72-16]

Virginia Electric and Power Company; Issuance of Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact Regarding the Proposed Amendment To Revise Technical Specifications of License No. SNM-2507

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC or Commission) is considering issuance of an amendment, pursuant to 10 CFR 72.56, to the Special Nuclear Material License No. 2507 (SNM-2507) held by Virginia Electric and Power Company (Virginia Power) for the North Anna independent spent fuel storage installation (ISFSI). The requested amendment would revise the Technical Specifications of SNM-2507 to specifically permit the storage of burnable poison rod assemblies (BPRA) and thimble plug devices (TPD) within the TN-32 casks used at the North Anna ISFSI.

Environmental Assessment

Identification of Proposed Action

By letter dated April 5, 1999, as supplemented by letter dated August 27, 1999, Virginia Power requested an amendment to revise the Technical Specifications of SNM-2507 for the North Anna ISFSI. The changes to the Technical Specifications would specifically permit the storage of BPRAs and/or TPDs within the TN-32 dry storage casks used at the North Anna ISFSI.

Need for the Proposed Action

The proposed action will eliminate the need to physically remove BPRAs and TPDs from irradiated fuel assemblies prior to dry cask storage which would result in one consolidated source of radioactive material and

reduce exposure time to plant workers during loadings.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action

The NRC has completed its evaluation of the proposed action and concludes that granting the request for amendment to specifically allow the storage of BPRAs and TPDs within the TN-32 casks used at the North Anna ISFSI will not increase the probability or consequences of accidents. No changes are being made in the types of any effluents that may be released off site. With regard to radiological impacts, the addition of irradiated BPRAs and TPDs only affects the gamma source term of the cask. In the previous shielding analysis, the calculated cask surface dose rate from the design basis contents was increased by an expansion factor before calculating the estimated offsite dose to allow for future increases in fuel burnup and enrichment and possible variations in cask design. For this amendment, the Virginia Power's calculated increase in surface dose rate resulting from the added BPRAs and TPDs remains within the bounds of the previous analysis with the expansion factor and, consequently, results in no significant increase in occupational or public radiation exposure. Therefore, there are no significant radiological environmental impacts associated with the proposed action.

The amendment only affects the requirements associated with the contents of the casks and does not affect non-radiological plant effluents or any other aspects of the environment. Therefore, there are no significant non-radiological environmental impacts associated with the proposed action.

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

Alternative to the Proposed Action

The alternative to the proposed action would be to deny the request for amendment (*i.e.*, the "no-action" alternative). Denial of the proposed action would result in the need to physically remove BPRAs and TPDs from each fuel assembly possessing them prior to the loading of that assembly into dry cask storage. Physical removal of irradiated BPRAs and TPDs would increase the exposure time and dose to the plant workers. In addition, it would require disposal or storage of additional radioactive material (*i.e.*, BPRAs and TPDs) that would otherwise be safely stored if the BPRAs and TPDs are left intact with their irradiated fuel assembly and loaded into dry cask

storage. The environmental impacts of the alternative action are greater than the proposed action.

Given that there are greater environmental impacts associated with the alternative action of denying the request for amendment, the Commission concludes that the preferred alternative is to grant this amendment.

Agencies and Persons Consulted

On September 27, 1999, Mr. Les Foldese of the Virginia Department of Health, Bureau of Radiological Health, was contacted in regard to the proposed action and had no concerns.

Finding of No Significant Impact

The environmental impacts of the proposed action have been reviewed in accordance with the requirements set forth in 10 CFR part 51. Based upon the foregoing Environmental Assessment, the Commission finds that the proposed action of granting an amendment to permit the storage of BPRAs and TPDs within the TN-32 casks used at the North Anna ISFSI will not significantly impact the quality of the human environment. Accordingly, the Commission has determined not to prepare an environmental impact statement for the proposed amendment.

For further details with respect to this action, see the amendment application dated April 5, 1999, as supplemented on August 27, 1999. These documents are available for public inspection at the Commission's Public Document Room, 2120 L Street, NW, Washington, DC 20555 and the Local Public Document Room at the University of Virginia Alderman Library, Charlottesville, VA 22903.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 7th day of October 1999.

For The Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

E. William Brach,

Director, Spent Fuel Project Office, Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards.

[FR Doc. 99-26940 Filed 10-14-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7590-01-P

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[Docket 72-2]

Virginia Electric and Power Company; Issuance of Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact Regarding the Proposed Amendment To Revise Technical Specifications of License No. SNM-2501

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC or Commission) is considering issuance of an amendment, pursuant to 10 CFR 72.56, to the Special

Nuclear Material License No. 2501 (SNM-2501) held by Virginia Electric and Power Company (Virginia Power) for the Surry independent spent fuel storage installation (ISFSI). The requested amendment would revise the Technical Specifications of SNM-2501 to specifically permit the storage of burnable poison rod assemblies (BPRAs) and thimble plug devices (TPD) within the TN-32 casks used at the Surry ISFSI.

Environmental Assessment

Identification of Proposed Action

By letter dated April 5, 1999, as supplemented by letter dated August 27, 1999, Virginia Power requested an amendment to revise the Technical Specifications of SNM-2501 for the Surry ISFSI. The changes to the Technical Specifications would specifically permit the storage of BPRAs and/or TPDs within the TN-32 dry storage casks used at the Surry ISFSI.

Need for the Proposed Action

The proposed action will eliminate the need to physically remove BPRAs and TPDs from irradiated fuel assemblies prior to dry cask storage which would result in one consolidated source of radioactive material and reduce the exposure time to plant workers during loadings.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action

The NRC has completed its evaluation of the proposed action and concludes that granting the request for amendment to specifically allow the storage of BPRAs and TPDs within the TN-32 casks used at the Surry ISFSI will not increase the probability or consequences of accidents. No changes are being made in the types of any effluents that may be released off site. With regard to radiological impacts, the addition of irradiated BPRAs and TPDs only affects the gamma source term of the cask. In the previous shielding analysis, the calculated cask surface dose rate from the design basis contents was increased by an expansion factor before calculating the estimated offsite dose to allow for future increases in fuel burnup and enrichment and possible variations in cask design. For this amendment, the Virginia Power's calculated increase in surface dose rate resulting from the added BPRAs and TPDs remains within the bounds of the previous analysis with the expansion factor and, consequently, results in no significant increase in occupational or public radiation exposure. Therefore, there are no significant radiological environmental

impacts associated with the proposed action.

The amendment only affects the requirements associated with the contents of the casks and does not affect non-radiological plant effluents or any other aspects of the environment. Therefore, there are no significant non-radiological environmental impacts associated with the proposed action.

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

Alternative to the Proposed Action

The alternative to the proposed action would be to deny the request for amendment (*i.e.*, the "no-action" alternative). Denial of the proposed action would result in the need to physically remove BPRAs and TPDs from each fuel assembly possessing them prior to the loading of that assembly into dry cask storage. Physical removal of irradiated BPRAs and TPDs would increase the exposure time and dose to the plant workers. In addition, it would require disposal or storage of additional radioactive material (*i.e.*, BPRAs and TPDs) that would otherwise be safely stored if the BPRAs and TPDs are left intact with their irradiated fuel assembly and loaded into dry cask storage. The environmental impacts of the alternative action are greater than the proposed action.

Given that there are greater environmental impacts associated with the alternative action of denying the request for amendment, the Commission concludes that the preferred alternative is to grant this amendment.

Agencies and Persons Consulted

On September 27, 1999, Mr. Les Foldese of the Virginia Department of Health, Bureau of Radiological Health, was contacted in regard to the proposed action and had no concerns.

Finding of No Significant Impact

The environmental impacts of the proposed action have been reviewed in accordance with the requirements set forth in 10 CFR Part 51. Based upon the foregoing Environmental Assessment, the Commission finds that the proposed action of granting an amendment to permit the storage of BPRAs and TPDs within the TN-32 casks used at the Surry ISFSI will not significantly impact the quality of the human environment. Accordingly, the Commission has determined not to prepare an environmental impact statement for the proposed amendment.

For further details with respect to this action, see the amendment application