

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]

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## **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

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 Swem Library, the College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, VA 23185.

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. 99-26941 Filed 10-14-99; 8:45 am]

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**NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION**

**Products and Results of Research at the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Halden Reactor Project**

**AGENCY:** Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

**ACTION:** Notice of seminar.

**SUMMARY:** The NRC has committed through its Strategic Plan to conduct confirmatory and anticipatory research on issues of potential regulatory and safety significance, engage in cooperative, international research agreements, and provide timely information to our stakeholders. As part of this commitment, a seminar has been planned to present on-going research being conducted at the OECD Halden Reactor Project in Norway. The goal of this seminar is to inform our stakeholders of current research activities and to solicit their perspectives and interest in the safety assessment of fuels, materials, and nuclear power plant control room design.

**DATE:** November 1-2, 1999—The seminar will begin at 12:30 p.m. on November 1st and end at 5 p.m. on November 2nd.

**LOCATION:** Doubletree Hotel, Twinbrook, Rockville, MD 20852.

**CONTACT:** Registration—Michael Scott, Phone: (301) 415-5698, e-mail: [mas2@nrc.gov](mailto:mas2@nrc.gov); General—Julius Persensky, Phone: (301) 415-6759, e-mail: [jpp2@nrc.gov](mailto:jpp2@nrc.gov).

**ATTENDANCE:** This seminar is free and open to the general public. All individuals planning to attend should preregister with Mr. Michael Scott by telephone or e-mail and provide their name, affiliation, phone number, and e-mail address.

**PROGRAM:** This seminar describes past and current research results, as well as products and tools that may be useful in a wide range of applications. There will be four sessions covering the following topics.

- Fuels and Materials Research.
- Human Factors Engineering and Control Room Design.
- Virtual Reality Technology.
- Instrumentation and Control Systems and Tools.

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

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

**Charles E. Rossi,**

*Director, Division of Systems Analysis and Regulatory Effectiveness.*

[FR Doc. 99-26939 Filed 10-14-99; 8:45 am]

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**PENSION BENEFIT GUARANTY CORPORATION**

**Interest Assumption for Determining Variable-Rate Premium; Interest on Late Premium Payments; Interest on Underpayments and Overpayments of Single-Employer Plan Termination Liability and Multiemployer Withdrawal Liability; Interest Assumptions for Multiemployer Plan Valuations Following Mass Withdrawal**

**AGENCY:** Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation.

**ACTION:** Notice of interest rates and assumptions.

**SUMMARY:** This notice informs the public of the interest rates and assumptions to be used under certain Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation regulations. These rates and assumptions are published elsewhere (or are derivable from rates published elsewhere), but are collected and published in this notice for the convenience of the public. Interest rates are also published on the PBGC's web site (<http://www.pbgc.gov>).

**DATES:** The interest rate for determining the variable-rate premium under part 4006 applies to premium payment years beginning in October 1999. The interest assumptions for performing multiemployer plan valuations following mass withdrawal under part 4281 apply to valuation dates occurring in November 1999. The interest rates for late premium payments under part 4007 and for underpayments and overpayments of single-employer plan termination liability under part 4062 and multiemployer withdrawal liability under part 4219 apply to interest accruing during the fourth quarter (October through December) of 1999.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Harold J. Ashner, Assistant General Counsel, Office of the General Counsel, Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, 1200 K Street, NW., Washington, DC 20005, 202-326-4024. (For TTY/TDD users, call the Federal relay service toll-free at 1-800-877-8339 and ask to be connected to 202-326-4024.)

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

**Variable-Rate Premiums**

Section 4006(a)(3)(E)(iii)(II) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA) and § 4006.4(b)(1) of the PBGC's regulation on Premium Rates (29 CFR part 4006) prescribe use of an assumed interest rate in determining a single-employer plan's variable-rate premium. The rate is the "applicable percentage" (currently 85 percent) of the annual yield on 30-year Treasury securities for the month preceding the beginning of the plan year for which premiums are being paid (the "premium payment year"). The yield figure is reported in Federal Reserve Statistical Releases G.13 and H.15.

The assumed interest rate to be used in determining variable-rate premiums for premium payment years beginning in October 1999 is 5.16 percent (*i.e.*, 85 percent of the 6.07 percent yield figure for September 1999).

The following table lists the assumed interest rates to be used in determining variable-rate premiums for premium payment years beginning between November 1998 and October 1999.

For premium payment years beginning in	The assumed interest rate is
November 1998 .....	4.26
December 1998 .....	4.46
January 1999 .....	4.30
February 1999 .....	4.39
March 1999 .....	4.56
April 1999 .....	4.74
May 1999 .....	4.72
June 1999 .....	4.94
July 1999 .....	5.13
August 1999 .....	5.08
September 1999 .....	5.16
October 1999 .....	5.16

**Late Premium Payments; Underpayments and Overpayments of Single-Employer Plan Termination Liability**

Section 4007(b) of ERISA and § 4007.7(a) of the PBGC's regulation on Payment of Premiums (29 CFR part 4007) require the payment of interest on late premium payments at the rate established under section 6601 of the Internal Revenue Code. Similarly, § 4062.7 of the PBGC's regulation on