For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

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NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[Docket Nos. 50–373 and 50–374]

Exelon Generation Company, LLC; Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is considering issuance of an amendment to Facility Operating License No. NPF–11 and NPF–18, issued to Exelon Generation Company, LLC, (EGC, or the licensee), for operation of LaSalle County Station, Units 1 and 2 (LaSalle), respectively, located in LaSalle County, Illinois. The original application was submitted by Commonwealth Edison Company (ComEd), which merged to form EGC. By letter dated February 7, 2001, EGC assumed responsibility for all pending NRC actions that were requested by ComEd.

Environmental Assessment

Identification of the Proposed Action

The proposed amendment would be a full conversion from the current Technical Specifications (CTS) to a set of improved Technical Specifications (ITS) based on NUREG–1433, ''Standard Technical Specifications—General Electric Plants, BWR/4,'' Revision 1, dated April 1995, and NUREG–1434, ''Standard Technical Specifications—General Electric Plants, BWR/6,'' Revision 1, dated April 1995. The proposed action is in accordance with the licensee's application dated March 3, 2000, as supplemented by letters dated March 24, June 5 (two letters), July 18, July 31, September 1, September 22, October 5, October 9, November 20, and December 18, 2000; and February 15, February 28, and March 7, 2001.

The Need for the Proposed Action

It has been recognized that nuclear safety in all plants would benefit from improvement and standardization of Technical Specifications (TSs). The ''NRC Interim Policy Statement on Technical Specification Improvements for Nuclear Power Reactors'' (52 FR 3788) contained proposed criteria for defining the scope of TSs. Later, the ''NRC Final Policy Statement on TS Improvement for Nuclear Power Reactors'' (58 FR 39132) incorporated lessons learned since publication of the interim policy statement and formed the basis for a revision to 10 CFR 50.36. The ''Final Rule'' (60 FR 36953) codified criteria for determining the content of TSs. To facilitate the development of ITS, each reactor vendor owners group and the NRC staff developed standard TSs (STS). The NRC Committee to Review Generic Requirements reviewed the STS, made note of their safety merits, and indicated its support of conversion by operating plants to the STS. For LaSalle, the STS are NUREG–1433, Revision 1, ''Standard Technical Specifications, General Electric Plants BWR/4,'' dated April 1995, and NUREG–1434, ''Standard Technical Specifications—General Electric Plants, BWR/6,'' Revision 1, dated April 1995. These documents formed the basis for the LaSalle ITS conversion.

Description of the Proposed Change

The proposed changes to the CTS are based on NUREG–1433, NUREG–1434, and guidance provided in the Final Policy Statement. Its objective is to completely rewrite, reformat, and streamline the CTS (i.e., to convert the CTS to the ITS). Emphasis is placed on human factors principles to improve clarity and understanding. The Bases section has been significantly expanded to clarify and better explain the purpose and foundation of each specification. In addition to NUREG–1433 and NUREG–1434, portions of the CTS were also used as the basis for the development of the LaSalle ITS. Plant-specific issues (unique design features, requirements, and operating practices) were discussed at length with the licensee.

The proposed changes from the CTS can be grouped into four general categories. These groupings are characterized as administrative changes, technical changes—relocations, technical changes—more restrictive, and technical changes—less restrictive. They are described as follows:

1. Administrative changes are those that involve restructuring, renumbering, rewording, interpretation, and complex rearranging of requirements and other changes not affecting technical content or substantially revising an operating requirement. The reformatting, renumbering, and rewording process reflects the attributes of NUREG–1433 and NUREG–1434, and does not involve technical changes to the existing TSs. The proposed changes include: (a) Identifying plant-specific wording for system names, etc., (b) changing the wording of specification titles in the CTS to conform to STS, (c) splitting up requirements that are currently grouped, or combining requirements that are currently in separate specifications, (d) deleting specifications whose applicability has expired, and (e) wording changes that are consistent with the CTS but that more clearly or explicitly state existing requirements. Such changes are administrative in nature and do not impact initiators of analyzed events or assumed mitigation of accident or transient events.

2. Relocation changes are those involving relocation of requirements and surveillances for structures, systems, components, or variables that do not meet the criteria for inclusion in TSs. Relocated changes are those CTS requirements that do not satisfy or fall within any of the four criteria specified in the NRC's policy statement and may be relocated to appropriate licensee-controlled documents.

The licensee's application of the screening criteria to LaSalle is described in Volume 1 of Enclosure B to the March 3, 2000, submittal. The affected structures, systems, components, or variables are not assumed to be initiators of analyzed events and are not assumed to mitigate accident or transient events. The requirements and surveillances for these affected structures, systems, components, or variables will be relocated from the TSs to administratively controlled documents such as the Updated Final Safety Analysis Report (UFSAR), the ITS Bases, or other licensee-controlled documents. Once these items have been relocated to other licensee-controlled documents, the licensee may revise them under the provisions of 10 CFR 50.59 or other NRC-approved control mechanisms, which provide appropriate procedural means to control changes by the licensee.

3. More restrictive changes are those involving more stringent requirements compared to the CTS for operation of the facility. These more stringent requirements do not result in operation that will alter assumptions relative to the mitigation of an accident or transient event. The more restrictive requirements will not alter the operation of process variables, structures, systems, and components described in the safety analyses.

4. Less restrictive changes are those where CTS requirements are relaxed, relocated or eliminated, or new plant operational flexibility is provided. The more significant ''less restrictive'' requirements are justified on a case-by-case basis. When requirements have been shown to provide little or no safety benefit, their removal from the TSs may be appropriate. In most cases,

relaxations previously granted to individual plants on a plant-specific basis were the result of (a) generic NRC actions, (b) new NRC staff positions that have evolved from technological advancements and operating experience, or (c) resolution of the Owners Groups' comments on the Improved Standard Technical Specifications. Generic relaxations contained in NUREG–1433 and NUREG–1434 were reviewed by the staff and found to be acceptable because they are consistent with current licensing practices and NRC regulations. Each less restrictive change in the LaSalle conversion was justified by the licensee in a Discussion of Change and reviewed by the NRC staff.

In addition, there are 12 changes that are different from the requirements in the CTS, NUREG–1433, or NUREG–1434, or that are beyond the changes that are needed to meet the overall purpose of the conversion. These changes are as follows:

1. The test interval of certain surveillance requirements is changed from 18 months to 24 months to permit a longer fuel cycle. Justification for the proposed change follows the guidance of Generic Letter 91–04, ''Changes in Technical Specification Surveillance Intervals to Accommodate a 24-Month Fuel Cycle,'' and includes a revision to the instrument setpoint methodology.

2. The requirements in CTS 4.3.7.5 are changed to allow 6 hours to perform surveillance testing of the post-accident monitoring instrumentation channels prior to entering action statements.

3. The requirements in CTS 4.3.7.4 are changed to allow 6 hours to perform surveillance testing of the remote shutdown monitoring system instrumentation channels prior to entering action statements.

4. The detailed list of the remote shutdown monitoring system instrumentation that is required to be operable (CTS 3.3.7.4) is relocated to the TRM.

5. The frequency for determining reactor coolant system leakage (CTS 4.4.3.2.1) is changed from 8 to 12 hours, which is consistent with the Generic Letter 88–01, Supplement 1, guidance to perform the surveillance once every shift, not to exceed 12 hours.

6. The requirements in CTS 4.4.3.1 are changed to allow a channel of leakage detection system to be inoperable for up to 6 hours for the performance of required surveillances provided the other leakage detection system instrumentation is operable.

7. The minimum pressure at which the automatic depressurization system is required to be operable (CTS 3.5.1) is increased from 122 psig to 150 psig.

8. The requirements (CTS 4.6.1.1) are changed to allow administrative means of verifying air lock door position in areas that are inaccessible due to high radiation or inerting.

9. The CTS 4.6.1.1 requirement that the excess flow check valves must ''check flow'' is changed to require that the valves ''actuate to their isolation position.''

10. The required battery voltage for the 250 volt battery (CTS 4.7.3.d.1.d) is increased from 250 volts to 256 volts, which is consistent with the 2.2 volts/cell requirement for the 125-volt battery.

11. The CTS 4.8.2.3.2 requirements will be modified to allow a modified performance discharge test to be used instead of a service test or a performance discharge test, which is consistent with IEEE–450.

12. The duration of the battery charger capacity test (CTS 4.8.2.3.2.c.4) is reduced from 8 hours to 4 hours.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action

The NRC has completed its evaluation of the proposed revision to the CTS. Changes which are administrative in nature have been found to have no effect on the technical content of the TSs and are acceptable. The increased clarity and understanding these changes bring to the TSs are expected to improve the operators' control of the plant in normal and accident conditions. Relocation of requirements to other licensee-controlled documents does not change the requirements themselves nor does 10 CFR 50.36(c)(2)(ii) mandate that the TSs include these requirements. Further changes to these requirements may be made by the licensee under 10 CFR 50.59 or other NRC-approved control mechanisms that ensure continued maintenance of adequate requirements. All such relocations have been found to be in conformance with the guidelines of NUREG–1433, NUREG–1434, and the Final Policy Statement and are, therefore, acceptable.

Changes involving more restrictive requirements have been found to enhance plant safety and to be acceptable.

Changes involving less restrictive requirements have been reviewed individually. When requirements have been shown to provide little or no safety benefit or to place unnecessary burden on the licensee, their removal from the TSs was justified. In most cases, relaxations previously granted to individual plants on a plant-specific basis were the result of a generic action, or of agreements reached during discussions with the Owners Groups, and have been found to be acceptable for LaSalle. Generic relaxations contained in NUREG–1433 and NUREG–1434 have also been reviewed by the NRC staff and have been found to be acceptable.

In summary, the proposed revisions to the CTS were found to provide control of plant operations such that reasonable assurance will be provided that the health and safety of the public will be adequately protected.

These changes to the TSs will not significantly 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 significant increase in occupational or public radiation exposure. Therefore, there are no significant radiological environmental impacts associated with the proposed amendment.

With regard to potential nonradiological impacts, the proposed amendment involves features located entirely within the restricted area as defined in 10 CFR Part 20 and does not involve any historical sites. It does not affect nonradiological plant effluents and has no other environmental impact. Therefore, there are no significant nonradiological environmental impacts associated with the proposed amendment.

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

Alternatives 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

This action does not involve the use of any resources not previously considered in the Final Environmental Statement for LaSalle, dated November 1978.

Agencies and Persons Consulted

In accordance with its stated policy, on February 20, 2001, the NRC consulted with the Illinois State official, Mr. F. Niziolek, regarding the environmental impacts of the proposed action. The State official had no comments.

Finding of No Significant Impact

On the basis of this environmental assessment, the NRC concludes that the proposed action will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment. Accordingly, the NRC 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 application dated March 3, 2000, as supplemented by letters dated March 24, June 5 (two letters), July 18, July 31, September 1, September 22, October 5, October 9, November 20, and December 18, 2000; and February 15, February 28, and March 7, 2001. Documents may be examined, and/or copied for a fee, at the NRC's Public Document Room, located at One White Flint North, 11555 Rockville Pike (first floor), Rockville, Maryland. Publicly available records will be accessible electronically from the ADAMS Public Library component on the NRC Web site, *http:www.nrc.gov* (the Electronic Reading Room).

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 21st day of March 2001.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

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NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[Docket No. 50–188]

Kansas State University; TRIGA Mark II Nuclear Research Reactor; Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) is considering the issuance of a license amendment to Facility Operating License No. R–88, issued to Kansas State University (the licensee) for operation of the Kansas State University TRIGA Mark II nuclear research reactor.

Environmental Assessment

Identification of the Proposed Action

The proposed action would allow extension of the license expiration time from August 15, 2001, to October 16, 2002, for the Kansas State University TRIGA Mark II nuclear research reactor. By letter dated February 1, 2001, and supplement dated February 12, 2001, the licensee requested this license extension by the provisions of 10 CFR 50.90. The licensee submitted an environmental report with their application.

Need for the Proposed Action

The proposed action is needed to allow continued operation of the Kansas State University TRIGA Mark II nuclear research reactor for research, development and educational activities beyond the current term of the license.

Environmental Impact of the Proposed Action

The Kansas State University TRIGA Mark II nuclear research reactor is on the University's campus in Manhattan, Kansas. The research reactor is housed in a closed room designed to restrict air flow.

The Kansas State University TRIGA Mark II nuclear research reactor is a low power (250 kilowatts), pool-type research reactor. The NRC licensed the facility for operation up to a power level of 100 kilowatts in 1962 and authorized operations up to 250 kilowatts with pulsing capability in 1968. From fiscal year 1981 to fiscal year 1999, the facility has operated ~800 megawatt-hours total. Data from recent operations, from 1995 to 1999, was assessed. The gaseous radiological release of Argon-41, the primary airborne effluent, has conservatively been estimated to result in 2.8 millirem exposure outside the facility. All gaseous releases were and are expected to remain well within regulatory requirements. Liquid effluents have been relatively small with the highest concentration in 1997 at 250 pCi/ml. Low-level solid radioactive waste between 1988 and 1998 was less than 245 mCi in 116 cubic feet of material.

The Commission concludes that the radiological effects of the continued operation will be minimal based on past radiological releases. The radiological exposures for facility operations have been within regulatory limits. Conditions are not expected to change significantly. 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 off site, and there is no significant increase in occupational or public radiation exposure. Therefore, there are no significant radiological environmental impacts associated with the proposed action.

As for potential non-radiological impacts, the proposed action does not involve any historic sites. It does not affect non-radiological effluents and has no other environmental impact. Therefore, no significant non-radiological environmental impacts are associated with the proposed action.

In addition, the environmental impact associated with operation of research reactors has been generically evaluated by the staff and is discussed in the attached generic evaluation. This evaluation concludes that no significant environmental impact is associated with the operation of research reactors licensed to operate at power levels up to and including 2 megawatts thermal. The NRC staff has determined that this generic evaluation is applicable to operation of the Kansas State University TRIGA Mark II nuclear research reactor and that there are no special or unique features that would preclude reliance on the generic evaluation.

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

Alternatives to the Proposed Action

An alternative to the proposed action for the facility is to deny the application (*i.e.*, ''no action'' alternative). If the application is denied, the licensee has indicated that it would apply for license renewal and operate under the timely renewal provisions of 10 CFR 2.109 until the Commission renewed or denied the license renewal application. With operation under timely renewal or renewal, the actual conditions of the reactor would not change. If the Commission denied license renewal, operations would stop and decommissioning would be required with a likely small impact on the environment. The environmental impacts of the proposed action and alternative action are similar.

Alternative Use of Resources

This action does not involve the use of any resources not previously considered in the Hazards Analysis prepared for the issuance of the construction permit in 1961 and for operating license in 1962.

Agencies and Persons Contacted

On March 1, 2001, the NRC staff consulted with the State of Kansas, Vick L. Cooper, Chief, Radiation Control Program, Kansas Department of Health and Environment, Bureau of Air and Radiation regarding the environmental impact of the proposed action. The State official had no comment.

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