

necessary to achieve the underlying purpose of that rule and that the use of Code Case N-514 would meet the underlying intent of the regulation. Based upon a consideration of the conservatism which are explicitly defined in the Appendix G methodology, it was concluded that permitting the COMS setpoint to be established such that the vessel pressure would not exceed 110 percent of the limit defined by the P-T limit curves would provide an adequate margin of safety against brittle failure of the reactor vessel. This is also consistent with the determination that has been reached for other licensees under similar conditions based on the same considerations. Therefore, the exemption requested under the special circumstances of 10 CFR 50.12(a)(2)(ii) was found to be acceptable. The staff also agrees that limiting the potential for inadvertent COMS actuation may improve plant safety.

#### IV

The Commission has determined that, pursuant to 10 CFR 50.12, this exemption is authorized by law, will not present an undue risk to the public health and safety, is consistent with the common defense and security, and is otherwise in the public interest. Therefore, the Commission hereby grants Union Electric Company an exemption from the requirements of 10 CFR 50.60 in order to apply ASME Code Case N-514 for determining the Callaway plant's cold overpressurization mitigation system pressure setpoint.

Pursuant to 10 CFR 51.32, the Commission has determined that the granting of this exemption will have no significant impact on the environment (63 FR 14739).

This exemption is effective upon issuance.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland this 30th day of March 1998.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

**Samuel J. Collins,**

*Director, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation.*

[FR Doc. 98-8770 Filed 4-2-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7590-01-P

## NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

### Proposed Generic Communication; Guidance on the Storage, Preservation, and Safekeeping of Quality Assurance Records in Electronic Media (M98441)

**AGENCY:** Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

**ACTION:** Notice of opportunity for public comment.

**SUMMARY:** The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is proposing to issue a generic letter to all holders of operating licenses for nuclear power plants, including those who have permanently ceased operations and have certified that fuel has been permanently removed from the reactor vessel, to provide guidance on an acceptable method, and NRC staff expectations, for storing, preserving, and safekeeping quality assurance (QA) records in electronic media. The generic letter does not provide guidance on submitting electronic records to the NRC. The guidance provided supplements Regulatory Guide (RG) 1.88, Revision 2, and RG 1.28, Revision 3. No specific action or written response is required by the generic letter.

The proposed generic letter has been endorsed by the Committee to Review Generic Requirements (CRGR). Relevant information that was sent to the CRGR will be placed in the NRC Public Document Room.

The NRC is seeking comment from interested parties regarding both the technical and regulatory aspects of the proposed generic letter presented under the Supplementary Information heading. The NRC will consider comments received from interested parties in the final evaluation of the proposed generic letter. The NRC's final evaluation will include a review of the technical position and, as appropriate, an analysis of the value/impact on licensees. Should this generic letter be issued by the NRC, it will become available for public inspection in the NRC Public Document Room.

**DATES:** Comment period expires June 2, 1998. Comments submitted after this date will be considered if it is practical to do so, but assurance of consideration cannot be given except for comments received on or before this date.

**ADDRESSES:** Submit written comments to Chief, Rules and Directives Branch, Division of Administrative Services, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Mail Stop T6-D59, Washington, DC 20555-0001. Written comments may also be delivered to 11545 Rockville

Pike, Rockville, Maryland, between 7:45 am and 4:15 pm, Federal workdays. Copies of written comments received may be examined at the NRC Public Document Room, 2120 L Street, N.W. (Lower Level), Washington, D.C.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT:** Michael T. Bugg, (301) 415-3221.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

### NRC Generic Letter XX-XX: Guidance of the Storage, Preservation, and Safekeeping of Quality Assurance Records in Electronic Media

#### Addressees

All holders of operating licenses for nuclear power plants, including those who have permanently ceased operations and have certified that fuel has been permanently removed from the reactor vessel.

#### Purpose

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is issuing this supplement to Generic Letter (GL) 88-18 to provide guidance on a methodology for storing, preserving, and safekeeping quality assurance (QA) records in electronic media. This generic letter supplement does not abrogate the guidance in Regulatory Guide (RG) 1.88, Revision 2, and RG 1.28, Revision 3. It also does not provide guidance on submitting electronic records to the NRC.

#### Background

Criterion VI, "Document Control," and Criterion XVII, "Quality Assurance Records," of Appendix B, "Quality Assurance Criteria for Nuclear Power Plants and Fuel Reprocessing Plants," to Part 50 of Title 10 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (10 CFR Part 50), establish requirements for the issuance, identification, and retrievability of QA records.

American National Standards Institute (ANSI) N45.2.9-1974, "Requirements for Collection, Storage, and Maintenance of Quality Assurance Records for Nuclear Power Plants," as endorsed by RG 1.88, "Collection, Storage, and Maintenance of Nuclear Power Plant Quality Assurance Records," Revision 2, and ANSI/American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME)-NQA-1, 1983 edition, "Quality Assurance Program Requirements for Nuclear Facilities," as endorsed by RG 1.28, "Quality Assurance Program Requirements (Design and Construction)," Revision 3, describe NRC-accepted practices for the collection, storage, and maintenance of nuclear power plant QA records.

On October 20, 1988, the NRC staff issued GL 88-18, "Plant Record Storage on Optical Disks," to provide guidance on appropriate quality controls for an optical disk document imaging system. GL 88-18 expanded on the guidance provided by RG 1.88 and RG 1.28 to describe an acceptable method for storing QA documents in optical media in accordance with the applicable criteria in Appendix B to 10 CFR Part 50.

#### *Discussion*

Although the guidance in GL 88-18, RG 1.88, and RG 1.28 remains relevant and acceptable, licensees and nuclear steam system suppliers have suggested that additional guidance which addresses the acceptability of new information management technologies is needed. NRC regulations already recognize the appropriateness of storing and maintaining licensee records in electronic media. Specifically, paragraph (d)(1) of 10 CFR 50.71, "Maintenance of Records, Making of Reports," states, in part, that records that must be maintained pursuant to 10 CFR Part 50 "may also be stored in electronic media with the capability of producing legible, accurate, and complete records during the required retention period." Therefore, this generic letter supplement provides the additional guidance requested by the nuclear industry for the storage and maintenance of QA records in electronic media. The guidance provided herein only applies to QA records that are subject to the requirements of Appendix B to 10 CFR Part 50, as noted in a licensee's QA program description.

Recognizing that addressees are responsible for ensuring the integrity of QA records, the attachment to this generic letter provides guidance on establishing an electronic recordkeeping system to maintain the integrity, authenticity, and acceptability of QA records during their required retention period in accordance with the requirements of Appendix B to 10 CFR Part 50.

This guidance also pertains to developing methods to authenticate and prevent alteration or falsification of electronic records. While the guidance provided herein constitutes an acceptable method for satisfying the applicable provisions of Appendix B to 10 CFR Part 50 with regards to QA record storage in electronic media, this guidance does not supersede current QA record commitments in the addressees' QA program descriptions. Additionally, this generic letter does not provide guidance on the storage of records in electronic media pursuant to other

regulations such as 10 CFR 73.21, "Requirements for the Protection of Safeguards Information."

Addressees using electronic media for storing, preserving, and safekeeping QA records should notify the NRC when updating their QA program description in accordance with 10 CFR 50.71(e) or 10 CFR 50.54(a), as appropriate. This submittal should describe the addressee's implementation of the guidance in this generic letter or otherwise describe how the relevant criteria in Appendix B to 10 CFR Part 50 continue to be satisfied if electronic media are used for storing, preserving, and safekeeping QA records.

#### *Related Generic Communication*

Generic Letter 88-18, "Plant Record Storage on Optical Disks," dated October 20, 1988.

#### **Attachment 1—Guidance on the Storage, Preservation, and Safekeeping of Quality Assurance Records in Electronic Media**

The Electronic Recordkeeping Subcommittee of the Regulations Committee of the Nuclear Information and Records Management Association, Inc. (NIRMA), has prepared a set of guidelines on the collection, storage, and maintenance of electronic quality assurance (QA) records for nuclear power plants. The guidelines included in NIRMA TG15-1993, "Management of Electronic Records" (which may be obtained from the Nuclear Information and Records Management Association, Inc., 210 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10010), are acceptable to the NRC staff and provide an adequate basis for complying with pertinent QA requirements of Appendix B to 10 CFR Part 50, subject to the following conditions related to the use of electronic signatures for authentication of records.

1. An electronic signature process should include (a) the printed name of the signer; (b) the date and time the signature is executed; (c) the meaning (such as review, approval, responsibility, or authorship) implied by the signature, which should not be used by, or assigned to, anyone else; (e) the organization responsible for establishing, assigning, certifying, or otherwise sanctioning an individual's electronic signature, or any element of such electronic signatures, which should be formally identified and duly authorized; and (f) electronic signatures linked to their respective electronic records to ensure that the signatures cannot be excised, copied, or otherwise transferred so as to falsify electronic records by ordinary means.

2. Electronic signatures that are not based upon biometrics (biometrics means a method of verifying an individual's identity on the bases of measurement of the individual's physical feature(s) or repeatable action(s) when those features and/or actions are both unique to that individual and measurable) should (a) employ at least two distinct identification components, such as an identification code and a password; (b) be used only by their genuine owners; and (c) be administered and executed to ensure that attempted use of an individual's electronic signature by anyone other than its genuine owner requires collaboration of two or more individuals. Electronic signatures based upon biometrics should be designed to ensure that they cannot be used by anyone other than their genuine owner.

3. Persons who use electronic signatures that are based upon use of identification codes in combination with passwords should employ controls to ensure their security and integrity. Such controls should include:

a. Ensuring that identification code and password issuance are periodically checked, recalled, or revised (e.g., to cover such events as password expiration as a result of employee departures).

b. The ability to electronically deactivate lost, stolen, missing, or otherwise potentially compromised tokens, cards, or other devices that bear or generate identification code or password information and to issue temporary or permanent replacements.

c. Use of transaction safeguards to prevent unauthorized use of passwords and/or identification codes and to immediately detect and report any unauthorized use to the system security unit and, as appropriate, to organizational management.

d. Initial and periodic testing of devices, such as tokens or cards, that bear or generate identification code or password information, to ensure that they function properly and have not been altered in an unauthorized manner.

#### **Attachment 2—References**

1. Appendix B, "Quality Assurance Criteria for Nuclear Power Plants and Fuel Reprocessing Plants" to Part 50 of Title 10 of the Code of Federal Regulations (10 CFR).

2. Title 10 of the Code of Federal Regulations (10 CFR), Section 50.71, "Maintenance of Records, Making of Reports."

3. Regulatory Guide 1.28, "Quality Assurance Program Requirements (Design and Construction)," Revision 3.

4. Regulatory Guide 1.88, "Collection, Storage, and Maintenance of Nuclear Power Plant Quality Assurance Records," Revision 2.

5. Generic Letter 88-18, "Plant Record Storage on Optical Disks," October 20, 1988.

6. American National Standards Institute (ANSI) N45.2.9-1974, "Requirements for Collection, Storage, and Maintenance of Quality Assurance Records for Nuclear Power Plants."

7. American National Standards Institute/American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ANSI/ASME)-NQA-1, 1983 edition, "Quality Assurance Program Requirements for Nuclear Facilities."

8. Title 21, Chapter I, "Food and Drugs," of the Code of Federal Regulations (21 CFR), Part 11, "Electronic Records; Electronic Signatures, Department of Health and Human Services, Food and Drug Administration."

9. Nuclear Information and Records Management Association, Inc., (NIRMA) TG15-1993, "Management of Electronic Records."

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 26th day of March 1998.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

**Jack W. Roe,**

*Acting Director, Division of Reactor Program Management, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation.*

[FR Doc. 98-8771 Filed 4-2-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7590-01-M

## NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[NUREG-1617]

### Standard Review Plan for Transportation Packages for Spent Nuclear Fuel; Notice of Issuance and Availability

The United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) has issued a draft report NUREG-1617 entitled "Standard Review Plan for Transportation Packages for Spent Nuclear Fuel" for review and comment.

The Standard Review Plan for Transportation Packages for Spent Nuclear Fuel provides guidance for the review and approval of applications for packages used to transport spent nuclear fuel under 10 CFR Part 71.

This standard review plan (SRP) is intended for use by the NRC staff. Its objectives are to (1) summarize 10 CFR Part 71 requirements for package approval, (2) describe the procedures by which the NRC staff determines that these requirements have been satisfied,

and (3) document the practices developed by the staff in previous reviews of package applications.

Draft NUREG-1617 is available for inspection and copying, for a fee, at the NRC Public Document Room, 2120 L Street NW (Lower Level), Washington, D.C. 20555-0001. A free copy of draft NUREG-1617 may be requested by writing to the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Printing and Graphics Branch, Washington, DC 20555-0001.

Comments on all aspects of this draft document are solicited and will be considered and may be incorporated in the Standard Review Plan, as appropriate. Appendix C to NUREG-1617 contains a data form that will be used to aid the NRC staff in transcribing the comment. A photocopy of the Appendix C form or a similar form containing the same information should be used. Comments on draft NUREG-1617 should be submitted by July 6, 1998.

This Standard Review Plan is scheduled for publication as an NRC NUREG document in 1999. A separate Standard Review Plan for Transportation Packages for Radioactive Material, NUREG 1609, was issued for public comment in September 1997. To ensure consistency between the two standard review plans, comments on sections common to both plans will be incorporated, as appropriate, in both documents.

Mail comments to: Chief, Rules and Directives Branch, Division of Administrative Services, Mail Stop T-6 D59, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001. Comments may be hand-delivered to 11545 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland between 7:30 am and 4:15 pm on Federal workdays.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 30th day of March, 1998.

For the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

**Susan F. Shankman,**

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

[FR Doc. 98-8769 Filed 4-2-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7590-01-P

## SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

[Rel. No. IC-23089; 812-10980]

### BlackRock Funds, et al.; Notice of Application

March 27, 1998.

**AGENCY:** Securities and Exchange Commission ("Commission").

**ACTION:** Notice of Application for an Order under the Investment Company Act of 1940 (the "Act").

### Summary of the Application

Applicants request an order under sections 6(c) and 17(b) of the Act for an exemption from section 17(a) of the Act to permit certain common trust funds to transfer their assets to certain series of registered open-end management investment companies in exchange for shares of the series.

### Applicants

BlackRock Funds, PNC Bank, National Association ("PNC Bank, N.A."), and PNC Select Equity Fund, PNC Large Cap Growth Equity Fund, PNC Large Cap Value Equity Fund, PNC Mid Cap Growth Equity Fund, PNC Mid Cap Value Equity Fund, PNC International Equity Fund, PNC Equity Growth & Income Fund, PNC Income Fund, and PNC Intermediate Bond Fund (collectively, the "Common Trust Funds").

### Filing Date

The application was filed on January 26, 1998 and amended on March 12, 1998.

### Hearing or Notification of Hearing

An order granting the application will be issued unless the Commission orders a hearing. Interested persons may request a hearing by writing to the Commission's Secretary and serving applicants with a copy of the request, personally or by mail. Hearing requests should be received by the Commission by 5:30 p.m., ET on April 21, 1998, and should be accompanied by proof of service on the applicants, in the form of an affidavit or, for lawyers, a certificate of service. Hearing requests should state the nature of the writer's interest, the reason for the request, and the issues contested. Persons who wish to be notified of a hearing may request notification by writing to the Commission's Secretary.

**ADDRESSES:** Secretary, Securities and Exchange Commission, 450 Fifth Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20549. Applicants c/o Robert P. Connolly, Esq., BlackRock, Inc., 1600 Market Street, 28th Floor, Philadelphia, PA 19103.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** George J. Zornada, Branch Chief, at (202) 942-0564, Office of Investment Company Regulation, Division of Investment Management.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The following is a summary of the application. The complete application may be obtained for a fee at the