

and make it immediately effective, notwithstanding the request for a hearing. Any hearing held would take place after issuance of the amendment.

If the final determination is that the amendment request involves a significant hazards consideration, any hearing held would take place before the issuance of any amendment.

A request for a hearing or a petition for leave to intervene must be filed with the Secretary of the Commission, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001, Attention: Rulemakings and Adjudications Staff, or may be delivered to the Commission's Public Document Room, the Gelman Building, 2120 L Street, NW., Washington, DC, by the above date. A copy of the petition should also be sent to the Office of the General Counsel, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001, and to Jay Silberg, Esquire, Shaw, Pittman, Potts and Trowbridge, 2300 N Street NW., Washington, DC 20037, attorney for the licensee.

Nontimely filings of petitions for leave to intervene, amended petitions, supplemental petitions and/or requests for hearing will not be entertained absent a determination by the Commission, the presiding officer or the presiding Atomic Safety and Licensing Board that the petition and/or request should be granted based upon a balancing of the factors specified in 10 CFR 2.714(a)(1)(i)-(v) and 2.714(d).

For further details with respect to this action, see the application for amendment dated August 1, 1996, which is available for public 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 Osterhout Free Library, Reference Department, 71 South Franklin Street, Wilkes-Barre, PA 18701.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 21st day of April 1998.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Bartholomew C. Buckley,

Acting Director, Project Directorate I-2, Division of Reactor Projects—I/II, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation.

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NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[Docket No. 70-0734]

Finding of No Significant Impact and Notice of Opportunity for Hearing for the Amendment of Materials License SNM-696, General Atomics, San Diego, CA

AGENCY: Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

ACTION: Finding of no significant impact and notice of opportunity for hearing for the amendment of materials license SNM-696, General Atomics, San Diego, CA.

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission is considering amendment of Special Nuclear Material License SNM-696, issued to General Atomics (the licensee) located in San Diego, California to incorporate a Site Decommissioning Plan. The Commission has determined not to prepare an environmental impact statement for the proposed action, because the amendment will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment for reasons described in the Environmental Assessment (EA).

Summary of the Environmental Assessment

Background

General Atomics (GA) has been authorized by the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) and its predecessor, the Atomic Energy Commission, to use special nuclear material in nuclear fuel fabrication and research and development for more than 30 years. Special nuclear material used at the San Diego site included the radioactive materials plutonium and uranium enriched in the isotopes uranium-233 and uranium-235. As operations changed at the site, GA initiated decommissioning activities affecting portions of the site beginning in the mid 1980's. By the early 1990's, fuel fabrication operations involving special nuclear material at the facility had ceased, and in September of 1996, GA's Special Nuclear Material License, SNM-696, was amended to authorize only activities incident to decommissioning. GA also currently has State of California Radioactive Materials License No. 0145-37 to possess and use source and byproduct materials and NRC Reactor Licenses, R-38 and R-67, for two Training Reactor-Isotope-General Atomics research reactors. By application dated October 11, 1996, and supplements dated December 5, 1996;

April 18, 1997; and January 15, 1998; GA requested an amendment to its fuel fabrication License SNM-696 to incorporate an overall Site Decommissioning Plan (DP).

Identification of the Proposed Action

The proposed action is the amendment of GA's license to incorporate the DP, which describes the remaining decommissioning activities planned at the GA facility under License SNM-696 and release of the site for unrestricted use. The DP describes the areas and facilities to be decommissioned, the decontamination techniques, and the proposed effluent control and waste management practices that will be used during decommissioning.

GA intends to decommission to radiation levels required for unrestricted use and to terminate License SNM-696 for these areas. Soil will be remediated to levels specified in Option 1 of the Branch Technical Position (BTP), "Disposal or Onsite Storage of Thorium or Uranium Wastes from Past Operations," (46 FR 52061; October 23, 1981). Facilities and equipment will be decontaminated to levels specified in "Guidelines for Decontamination of Facilities and Equipment Prior to Release for Unrestricted Use or Termination of Licenses for Byproduct, Source, or Special Nuclear Material," (USNRC, Policy and Guidance Directive FC 83-23, Division of Industrial and Medical Nuclear Safety, November 4, 1983).

The Need for the Proposed Action

GA is not required to submit an overall site DP because all procedures and activities necessary to carry out decommissioning of the site have been previously approved by the NRC, consistent with the provisions of 10 CFR 70.38(g)(1). However, the incorporation of overall site DP into GA's license reduces the administrative effort for both the licensee and the NRC by reducing the number of documents which must be generated and reviewed. It also facilitates a more consistent and organized decommissioning approach across the facility.

Environmental Impacts for the Proposed Action

The NRC staff performed a radiological dose assessment to estimate the impact from airborne radioactive releases under the proposed action. Only radioactive effluents were considered because non-radioactive releases are expected to be insignificant. In addition, because liquid effluents were released only through the sanitary

sewer system, these releases were considered to be insignificant compared to airborne releases due to dilution of these discharges prior to introduction into any potential drinking water source. Because the closest resident is approximately one mile from the facility and any discharges would be extensively diluted prior to exposure of the resident, the NRC assumed the maximally exposed individual was an on-site, non-radiation worker. (GA currently leases areas of the facility that have been previously released for unrestricted use). The NRC assumed this person was exposed 8 hours/day, 40 hours per week, 50 weeks per year.

During decommissioning, NRC estimated that the annual average release concentrations would be 5×10^{-14} $\mu\text{Ci/ml}$ of uranium (of various enrichments) and thorium, 1×10^{-13} $\mu\text{Ci/ml}$ of mixed activation and fission products, and 15×10^{-14} $\mu\text{Ci/ml}$ of other radionuclides ranging from atomic number 3 to 105. Using these assumptions, the total effective dose equivalent (TEDE) to the maximally exposed individual onsite was estimated to be approximately 0.15 mSv/yr (15 mrem/yr), which is less than one fifth of the dose limit for members of the public specified in 10 CFR 20.1301.

NRC probably overestimated the dose because it assumed that decommissioning of all areas of the facility will be conducted simultaneously, that Th-232 and Sr-90 are the predominant radionuclides released, and that there is no dilution from the release point to the individual exposed. Actual exposures are expected to be far lower. There are an estimated 2,000 employees at the GA facility, which results in a population dose of 0.3 person-Sv (30 person-rem), if every one of these employees received the maximum estimated individual dose. Actual population exposures are expected to be far lower. Doses to off-site members of the public are expected to be orders of magnitude lower due to dilution of the radionuclide concentrations.

An accident analysis was included in a 1995 Environmental Assessment, performed by the U.S. Department of Energy, to analyze impacts from Decommissioning of GA's Hot Cell Facility. This analysis concluded that there was no significant risk from accidents during decommissioning of this facility. This analysis is considered bounding for the decommissioning activities of the proposed action.

Cumulative impacts from the proposed action were also considered. As noted previously, substantial

decommissioning activities have been conducted at the site since the mid 1980s. Continuous environmental monitoring of the site throughout this period until the present has not detected any significant environmental impacts. The only on-going activities authorized by the NRC are the decommissioning activities discussed in the proposed action and decommissioning of the Hot Cell Facility, which has been previously approved. The environmental assessment performed for the Hot Cell Facility decommissioning project by the U.S. Department of Energy estimated a dose of 4×10^{-4} mSv/yr (0.04 mrem/yr) to the on-site, member of the public (who was considered to be the maximally exposed individual) and concluded that there were no environmental impacts. Cumulative impacts from decommissioning of the Hot Cell Facility and the operations specified in the site DP are, therefore, also expected to be insignificant. The TRIGA research reactors are currently not operating. The environmental impact from decommissioning of these facilities will be considered under the NRC Reactor Licenses.

Alternatives to the Proposed Action

The alternative to the proposed action is to deny approval of the Site DP and either require that the site be maintained in its contaminated state under the NRC license or terminate the license after completion of partial decommissioning, but impose site or area restrictions to protect the public from residual radioactivity.

This alternative would reduce the quantity of radioactive effluents expected during decommissioning of the facilities to levels suitable for unrestricted use. However, if contamination is left in-place there is a potential for the spread of this material to unaffected areas. Decommissioning at a later time may then result in increased effluents. If GA is unable to release these areas for unrestricted use, the company may also be economically impacted by the inability to sell or lease the facilities and by the resources required to maintain the site. The public would also not have the opportunity to use these areas productively.

Agencies and Persons Consulted

The DP was approved by the State of California by License Amendment dated July 5, 1996. The NRC staff consulted GA and the State of California, Department of Health Services, but did not consult any other State or Federal agencies in preparation of this Environmental Assessment.

Conclusion

Extensive decommissioning operations have been conducted at the GA facility since the mid-1980's. Effluent and environmental monitoring data indicate that all off-site radioactive releases have been below the effluent and dose limits established in 10 CFR Part 20 and have not resulted in any significant human health or environmental impact.

Future decommissioning operations are expected to be similar to decommissioning conducted previously by the facility and are, therefore, not expected to result in any significant environmental impact. This conclusion is also supported by a conservative dose assessment performed by the staff, which estimates a dose to the maximally exposed onsite individual of approximately 0.15 mSv/yr (15 mrem/yr). This is significantly below the dose limit for members of the public of 1 mSv/yr (100 mrem/yr) specified in 10 CFR part 20.

In addition, GA has committed to engineering controls, waste handling methods, and an effluent and environmental sampling program to keep releases as low as reasonably achievable and to ensure continued compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

Given the engineering controls, waste handling procedures, projected doses to members of the public and workers, and demonstrated ability to conduct these activities without adverse impacts to the environment, the staff concludes that the proposed action can be implemented without significant environmental impacts.

This environmental assessment was conducted based on preliminary characterization information. If further characterization data indicates that significantly greater concentrations of radionuclides or significantly different types of radionuclides may be released off-site, or if GA determines that significantly different decommissioning activities will be required that may result in significant impacts to workers or the environment, GA will be required to notify the NRC for review and approval of the proposed decommissioning activities.

Finding of No Significant Impact

The NRC has prepared an Environmental Assessment related to the amendment of Special Nuclear Material License SNM-696. On the basis of this assessment, NRC has concluded that the proposed licensing action would not cause significant environmental impacts and does not

warrant the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement. Accordingly, it has been determined that a finding of no significant impact is appropriate.

The Environmental Assessment, the license amendment application, and other documents related to this proposed action are available for public inspection and copying at the Commission's public document room in NRC's Region IV office, Harris Tower, 611 Ryan Plaza Drive, Suite 400, Arlington, Texas 76011-8064, and in NRC's headquarters public document room, Gelman Building, 2120 L St., NW., Washington, DC 20037.

Opportunity for a Hearing

Based on the EA and accompanying safety evaluation, NRC is preparing to amend License SNM-696. The NRC hereby provides notice that this is a proceeding on an application for amendment of a license falling within the scope of Subpart L, "Informal Hearing Procedure for Adjudication in Materials Licensing Proceedings," of NRC's rules and practice for domestic licensing processing in 10 CFR part 2. Pursuant to § 2.1205(a), any person whose interest may be affected by this proceeding may file a request for a hearing in accordance with § 2.1205(d). A request for a hearing must be filed within thirty (30) days of the date of this publication of the **Federal Register** notice.

The request for a hearing must be filed with the Office of Secretary either:

1. By delivery to the Docketing and Service Branch of the Secretary at One White Flint North, 11555 Rockville Pike, MD 20852-2738; or
2. By mail or telegram addressed to the Secretary, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555. Attention: Docketing and Services Branch.

In addition to meeting other applicable requirements of 10 CFR part 2 of NRC's regulations, a request for a hearing filed by a person other than an applicant must describe in detail:

1. The interest of the requester in the proceeding;
2. How that interest may be affected by the results of the proceeding, including reasons why the requested should be permitted a hearing, with particular reference to the factors set out in § 2.1205(h);
3. The requester's areas of concern about the licensing activity that is the subject matter of the proceeding; and
4. The circumstances establishing that the request for a hearing is timely in accordance with § 2.1205(d).

In accordance with 10 CFR 2.1205(f), each request for a hearing must also be served, by delivering it personally or by mail to:

1. The applicant, General Atomics, 3550 General Atomics Court, San Diego, CA 92121-1194; Attention: Dr. Keith E. Asmussen; and
2. The NRC staff, by delivering to the Executive Director for Operations, One White Flint North, 11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville, MD 20852, or by mail, addressed to the Executive Director for Operations, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555.

Any hearing that is requested and granted will be held in accordance with the NRC's Informal Hearing Procedures for Adjudications in Material Licensing Proceedings in 10 CFR part 2, subpart L. Questions with respect to this action should be referred to NRC's project manager for General Atomics, Charles Gaskin, at (301) 415-8116 or via Internet at ceg1@nrc.gov.

Dated at Rockville, Md., this 20th day of April 1998.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.
Michael F. Weber,
Chief Licensing Branch, Division of Fuel Cycle Safety and Safeguards, NMSS.
[FR Doc. 98-11123 Filed 4-24-98; 8:45 am]
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NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Notice of Availability of Draft NUREG-1628 "Staff Responses to Frequently Asked Questions Concerning Decommissioning of Nuclear Power Reactors"

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is announcing the availability of NUREG-1628, "Staff Responses to Frequently Asked Question Concerning Decommissioning of Nuclear Power Reactors," a draft report for comment dated April 1998.

This document, through a question-and-answer format, provides information to the public on decommissioning. The questions were taken from a variety of sources over the past several years, including written inquiries and questions asked at public meetings and during informal discussions with the NRC staff. The document was prepared in response to (1) the increase in the number of power reactors beginning the decommissioning process, (2) recent changes in the decommissioning regulations, and (3) a perceived lack of information available to members of the public on decommissioning. This document is being issued for public comment. As a

result of comments received from the members of the public, the final document may be modified.

The report contains information on the following topics as they relate to decommissioning: definition of decommissioning, decommissioning alternatives, decommissioning experience in the U.S. regulation of decommissioning, low-level waste storage and disposal of wastes associated with facility storage and decommissioning, high-level waste storage and disposal, license termination, hazards associated with decommissioning, financing, and public involvement during the decommissioning process.

Draft NUREG-1628 is available for inspection and copying for a fee at the NRC Public Document Room, 2120 L Street NW, (Lower Level), Washington, D.C. A free single copy of the draft NUREG-1628 may be requested by writing to U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Reproduction, and Distribution and Inventory Services Section, Washington, DC 20555-0001 or by faxing a request to 301-415-2289. For further information contact, John L. Minns, Division of Reactor Program Management, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001; telephone: 301-415-3166.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 21st day of April 1998.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.
Seymour H. Weiss,
Director, Non-Power Reactors and Decommissioning Project Directorate, Division of Reactor Program Management, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation.
[FR Doc. 98-11117 Filed 4-24-98; 8:45 am]
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OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET

Cumulative Report on Rescissions and Deferrals

April 1, 1998.

This report is submitted in fulfillment of the requirement of Section 1014(e) of the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974 (Pub. L. 93-344). Section 1014(e) requires a monthly report listing all budget authority for the current fiscal year for which, as of the first day of the month, a special message had been transmitted to Congress.

This report gives the status, as of April 1, 1998, of 24 rescission proposals and eight deferrals contained in two special messages for FY 1998. These