

and will not increase the allowable individual or public radiation exposure (Catawba Final Environmental Impact Statement, NUREG-0921 dated January 1983). Therefore, there are no significant radiological environmental impacts associated with the proposed action.

The staff also evaluated potential nonradiological impacts. On the basis that the proposed exemption involves no plant design change or procedure change, the staff finds that the proposed exemption does not affect any historic sites, does not increase or decrease nonradiological plant effluents, and has no other environmental impact from those previously evaluated by the staff (Catawba Final Environmental Impact Statement, NUREG-0921). Therefore, there are no significant nonradiological environmental impacts associated with the proposed action.

Accordingly, the staff 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. Thus, 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 Impact Statement related to the Catawba Nuclear Station (NUREG-0921).

Agencies and Persons Contacted

In accordance with its stated policy, on September 22, 1999, the staff consulted with the South Carolina State official, Mr. Virgil Autrey, of the Bureau of Land and Waste Management, Department of Health and Environmental Control, regarding the environmental impact of the proposed action. Mr. Autrey had no comments.

Finding of No Significant Impact

On the basis of the environmental assessment, the staff concludes that the proposed exemption will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment. Accordingly, the staff 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 request for the exemptions dated June 22, 1999, 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 York County Library, 138 East Black Street, Rock Hill, South Carolina.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 24th day of September 1999.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Peter S. Tam,

Senior Project Manager, Section 1, Project Directorate II, Division of Licensing and Project Management, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation.

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NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[Docket Nos. 50-369 and 50-370]

Duke Energy Corporation; McGuire Nuclear Station, Units 1 and 2 Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) is considering issuance of an exemption to 10 CFR Section 54.17(c), for Facility Operating License No. NPF-9, issued to Duke Energy Corporation (the licensee), for operation of McGuire Nuclear Station, Unit 2, located in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina.

Environmental Assessment

Identification of Proposed Action

The proposed action would exempt the licensee from certain requirements of Title 10 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (10 CFR) Section 54.17(c), which specifies that a licensee may not apply for a renewed operating license earlier than 20 years before the expiration of the operating license currently in effect. McGuire Nuclear Station, Unit 2, will not have met this schedular requirement by June 13, 2001 (the earliest date the licensee may apply concurrently for renewed licenses for the Catawba and McGuire units, see below). The proposed action is in response to the licensee's application dated June 22, 1999.

The Need for the Proposed Action

The licensee requested an exemption from the requirements of 10 CFR 54.17(c), which requires that an application for a renewed license may not be submitted to the U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) earlier than 20 years before the expiration of the operating license currently in effect. The current operating license for

McGuire, Unit 1, expires on June 12, 2021, and for McGuire, Unit 2, on March 3, 2023. The current operating license for Catawba, Unit 1, expires on December 6, 2024, and for Catawba, Unit 2, on February 24, 2026. If the licensee submits the renewal applications on the earliest possible date, June 13, 2001, when McGuire, Unit 1, meets the 20-year limit contained in Section 54.17(c), McGuire, Unit 2, will have approximately 18.3 years of operating experience and Catawba, Units 1 and 2, approximately 16.5 years and 15.3 years operating experience, respectively.

In its request, the licensee stated that business considerations dictate preparation and submission of concurrent license renewal applications for McGuire and Catawba. Further, the licensee stated that submission of such renewal applications in 2001, as opposed to some time thereafter, is necessary to obtain the full amount of the potential cost savings. To support preparation of the July 1998 Oconee Nuclear Station renewal applications, the licensee assembled a team of individuals with relevant experience in necessary disciplines to prepare the applications and to remain dedicated to the renewal effort throughout the period of NRC staff review. According to the licensee, granting the exemption request would allow it to use this same team of qualified and experienced professionals to prepare its McGuire and Catawba renewal applications. Thus, the licensee states that it can avoid redeployment costs that would arise if it were unable to proceed promptly with preparation of additional renewal applications.

The licensee's submittal of June 22, 1999, addressed both sites and all four units, but specifically sought schedular exemptions for Catawba, Units 1 and 2, and McGuire, Unit 2. This Environmental Assessment only addresses the licensee's request for schedular exemption for McGuire, Unit 2.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action

The staff has completed its evaluation of the environmental impacts of the proposed exemption. The exemption, if granted, will permit the licensee to apply for renewal of the existing McGuire, Unit 2 operating license sooner than would be allowed under the schedule specified by 10 CFR 54.17(c). Should the licensee apply to renew the licenses for the McGuire units, the environmental impacts of operating them under renewed licenses would then be evaluated by the licensee and the staff. In short, granting of the

exemption will not necessitate, or lead to, changes to the as-built plant design or existing procedures at the two McGuire units.

The staff evaluated potential radiological environmental impacts associated with granting the requested exemption. Since no plant design change or procedure change will be made, no new accident causal mechanisms would be introduced. For the same reason, the proposed exemption will not increase the probability or consequences of accidents previously evaluated by the staff (McGuire Safety Evaluation Report, NUREG-0422 dated March 1978 and supplements), will not change the types of effluents that may be released offsite, and will not increase the allowable individual or public radiation exposure (McGuire Final Environmental Impact Statement, NUREG-0063 dated April 1976). Therefore, there are no significant radiological environmental impacts associated with the proposed action.

The staff also evaluated potential nonradiological impacts. On the basis that the proposed exemption involves no plant design change or procedure change, the staff finds that the proposed exemption does not affect any historic sites, does not increase or decrease nonradiological plant effluents, and has no other environmental impact from those previously evaluated by the staff (McGuire Final Environmental Impact Statement, NUREG-0063). Therefore, there are no significant nonradiological environmental impacts associated with the proposed action.

Accordingly, the staff 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. Thus, 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 Impact Statement related to the McGuire Nuclear Station (NUREG-0063).

Agencies and Persons Contacted

In accordance with its stated policy, on September 22, 1999, the staff consulted with the North Carolina State official, Mr. Johnny James, of the Bureau

of Land and Waste Management, Department of Health and Environmental Control, regarding the environmental impact of the proposed action. Mr. James had no comments.

Finding of No Significant Impact

On the basis of the environmental assessment, the staff concludes that the proposed exemption will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment. Accordingly, the staff 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 request for the exemptions dated June 22, 1999, 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 J. Murrey Atkins Library, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, 9201 University City Boulevard, Charlotte, North Carolina.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 24th day of September 1999.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Frank Rinaldi,

Project Manager, Section 1, Project Directorate II, Division of Licensing and Project Management, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation.

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NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[Docket No. 50-368]

Entergy Operations, Inc.; Arkansas Nuclear One, Unit No. 2 Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) is considering issuance of an exemption from certain requirements of its regulations for Facility Operating License No. NPF-6 issued to Entergy Operations, Inc. (the licensee), for operation of Arkansas Nuclear One, Unit 2 (ANO-2), located in Pope County, Arkansas.

Environmental Assessment

Identification of Proposed Action

The proposed action would exempt the licensee from the requirements of Title 10 of the *Code of Federal Regulations*, Part 50 (10 CFR part 50), appendix R, Section III.G.2.c, regarding the fire protection of the safe shutdown capability for equipment located below

the 354 foot elevation of the ANO-2 intake structure. The licensee is requesting an exemption from the specific requirement to provide fire detectors and an automatic fire suppression system to protect redundant trains of safe shutdown equipment that are located in the same fire zone.

The proposed action is in accordance with the licensee's application for exemption dated October 8, 1997, as supplemented by letter dated February 25, 1999.

The purpose of 10 CFR part 50, appendix R, Section III.G.2, is to ensure that adequate fire protection features are provided for redundant cables or equipment located in the same fire area outside of primary containment such that at least one of the redundant trains of safe shutdown equipment will remain available during and after any postulated fire in the plant to achieve and maintain safe shutdown conditions. Section III.G.2.c requires the following means of assurance:

Enclosure of cable and equipment and associated non-safety circuits of one redundant train in a fire barrier having a 1-hour rating. In addition, fire detectors and an automatic fire suppression system shall be installed in the fire area.

The ANO-2 intake structure below the 354 foot elevation consists of three service water intake bays, which contain service water (SW) piping and conduits. The bays are approximately 7 feet by 32 feet and are separated from one another by 2-foot thick, non-rated concrete walls. The bays are separated from the ground level by an 18-inch thick, non-rated concrete slab on metal decking. The floor of the bays is typically covered with water 16 feet deep. The ceiling height is approximately 14 feet above the normal pool level. Of the three bays, only the "A" SW intake bay contains redundant cables. The licensee stated that the total in-situ combustible loading is 3,469,060 BTUs, which is equivalent to a fire severity to a standard fire duration of less than 4 minutes. Each bay is administratively controlled as a "confined space," thus limiting access by personnel during routine operations and precluding the accumulation of combustibles. In addition, the licensee's administrative procedures limit the transient combustibles to 5 pounds unless personnel are continuously present in the area. In such cases, the personnel could be either the craft personnel responsible for using the combustible materials or a continuous fire watch. Water to the bay is normally provided