Reduction of Spent Fuel Generation

Improved usage of fuel and/or operation at a reduced power level would decrease the amount of fuel being stored in the pool and thus increase the amount of time before full core off-load capability is lost. With extended burnup of fuel assemblies, the fuel cycle would be extended and fewer offloads would be necessary. The licensee has already increased its fuel enrichment to 5 percent and is currently operating on 18-month refueling cycles. Operating the plant at a reduced power level would not make effective use of available resources, and would cause unnecessary economic hardship on CP&L and its customers. Therefore, reducing the amount of spent fuel generated by increasing burnup further or reducing power is not considered a practical alternative.

Alternative Creation of Additional Storage Capacity

Alternative technologies that would create additional storage capacity include rod consolidation, dry cask storage, and modular vault dry storage. Rod consolidation involves disassembling the spent fuel assemblies and storing the fuel rods from two or more assemblies in a stainless steel canister that can be stored in the spent fuel racks. Industry experience with rod consolidation is currently limited, primarily due to concerns for potential gap activity release due to rod breakage, the potential for increased fuel cladding corrosion due to some of the protective oxide layer being scraped off, and because the prolonged consolidation activity could interfere with ongoing plant operations. Dry cask storage is a method of transferring spent fuel, after storage in the pool for several years, to high capacity casks with passive heat dissipation features. After loading, the casks are stored outdoors on a seismically qualified concrete pad. Concerns for dry cask storage include the potential for fuel or cask handling accidents, potential fuel clad rupture due to high temperatures, increased land use, construction impacts, the need for additional security provisions, and high costs. Vault storage consists of storing spent fuel in shielded stainless steel cylinders in a horizontal configuration in a reinforced concrete vault. The concrete vault provides missile and earthquake protection and radiation shielding. Concerns for vault dry storage include the need for additional security provisions, increased land use, construction impacts, eventual decommissioning of the new vault, the potential for fuel or clad rupture due to high temperatures, and high cost.

The environmental impacts of the alternative technologies discussed above and the proposed action are similar.

The No-Action Alternative

As an alternative to the proposed action, the staff also 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.

Alternative Use of Resources

This action does not involve the use of any resources not previously considered in the Final Environmental Statement for HNP.

Agencies and Persons Consulted

In accordance with its stated policy, on December 2 and 3, 1999, the staff consulted with North Carolina State officials, Mr. Richard M. Fry and Mr. Johnny James of the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources, regarding the environmental impact of the proposed action. The State officials stated that they had no objection to the finding. However, they requested that the staff hold a public meeting in Raleigh, North Carolina to discuss the license amendment review process, the results of the review for HNP's proposed amendment, and the analysis that led to this environmental assessment finding.

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 Commission 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 letter dated December 23, 1998, as supplemented by letters dated April 30, June 14, July 23, September 3, October 15, and October 29, 1999, which are available for public inspection at the Commission's Public Document Room, The Gelman Building, 2120 L Street, NW., Washington, DC.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 15th day of December 1999.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Richard P. Correia,

Chief, Section 2, Project Directorate II, Division of Licensing Project Management, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation.

[FR Doc. 99–33023 Filed 12–20–99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7590–01–P

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[Docket Nos. 50–269, 50–270, and 50–287]

Duke Power Company; Notice of Availability of the Final Supplement 2 to the Generic Environmental Impact Statement for the License Renewal of Oconee Nuclear Station, Unit Nos. 1, 2, and 3

Notice is hereby given that the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) has published a final plant-specific Supplement 2 to the Generic Environmental Impact Statement for License Renewal of Nuclear Plants (GEIS) (NUREG–1437) regarding the renewal of operating licenses DPR–38, DPR–47, and DPR–55 for an additional 20 years of operation at the Oconee Nuclear Station (ONS) Units 1, 2, and 3, respectively. ONS is located in Oconee County, South Carolina. Possible alternatives to the proposed action (license renewal) include no action and reasonable alternative energy sources.

In Section 9.3 of the report, the staff concludes:

Based on (1) the analysis and findings in the Generic Environmental Impact Statement for License Renewal of Nuclear Power Plants, NUREG–1437, (2) the ER [Environmental Report] submitted by Duke, (3) consultation with other Federal, State, and local agencies, (4) the staff's own independent review, and (5) the staff's consideration of public comments, the staff recommends that the Commission determine that the adverse environmental impacts of license renewal for Oconee Nuclear Station, Units 1, 2, and 3 are not so great that preserving the option of license renewal for energy planning decisionmakers would be unreasonable.

The final supplement to the GEIS for ONS is available for public inspection and copying at the Commission's Public Document Room at the Gelman Building, 2120 L Street NW., Washington, DC.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT: Mr. James H. Wilson, Generic Issues, Environmental, Financial, and Rulemaking Branch, Division of Regulatory Improvement Programs, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555. Mr. Wilson can be contacted at (301) 415–1108 or by writing to: James H. Wilson, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, MS 0–11 F1, Washington, DC 20555.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 9th day of December 1999.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

David B. Matthews,

Director, Division of Regulatory Improvement Programs, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation.

[FR Doc. 99–33022 Filed 12–20–99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7590–01–P

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards and Advisory Committee on Nuclear Waste; Joint Subcommittee Meeting; Notice of Meeting

The ACRS and ACNW Joint Subcommittee will hold a meeting on January 13–14, 2000, Room T–2B3, 11545 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland.

The meeting will be open to public attendance.

The agenda for the subject meeting shall be as follows:

Thursday, January 13, 2000—8:30 a.m. until 5 p.m.

Friday, January 14, 2000—8:30 a.m. until 12 Noon

The Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards and Advisory Committee on Nuclear Waste Joint Subcommittee will discuss the defense-in-depth philosophy in the regulatory process, including its role in the licensing of a high-level waste repository, its role in revising the regulatory structure for nuclear reactors, and how the two applications should be related to each other. The discussion will also include the role of defense in depth in the regulation of nuclear materials applications, and other related matters. The purpose of this meeting is to gather information, analyze relevant issues and facts, and formulate proposed positions and actions, as appropriate, for deliberation by the full Committees.

Oral statements may be presented by members of the public with the concurrence of the Subcommittee; written statements will be accepted and made available to the Subcommittee. Electronic recordings will be permitted only during those portions of the meeting that are open to the public, and questions may be asked only by members of the Subcommittee, its consultants, and staff. Persons desiring to make oral statements should notify the cognizant ACRS/ACNW staff members named below five days prior to the meeting, if possible, so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

During the initial portion of the meeting, the Subcommittee, along with any consultants who may be present, may exchange preliminary views regarding matters to be considered during the balance of the meeting.

The Subcommittee will then hear presentations by and hold discussions with representatives of the NRC staff, its consultants, and other interested persons regarding these matters.

Further information regarding topics to be discussed, whether the meeting has been canceled or rescheduled, the Subcommittee's ruling on requests for the opportunity to present oral statements and the time allotted therefor can be obtained by contacting the cognizant senior fellow, John N. Sorensen (telephone 301/415–7372) between 8 a.m. and 5:45 p.m. (EST) or by e-mail JNS@NRC.gov or staff engineer, Michael T. Markley (telephone: 301–415–6885). Persons planning to attend this meeting are urged to contact the above-named individuals one to two working days prior to the meeting to be advised of any potential changes in the proposed agenda, *etc.*, that may have occurred.

Dated: December 15, 1999.

Howard J. Larson,

Acting Associate Director for Technical Support, ACRS/ACNW.

[FR Doc. 99–33019 Filed 12–20–99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7590–01–P

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[Docket No. 70–754–MLA and ASLBP No. 00–774–02–MLA]

General Electric Company; Designation of Presiding Officer

Pursuant to delegation by the Commission dated December 29, 1972, published in the **Federal Register**, 37 FR 28,710 (1972), and Sections 2.1201 and 2.1207 of Part 2 of the Commission's Regulations, a single member of the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board Panel is hereby designated to rule on petitions for leave to intervene and/or requests for hearing and, if necessary, to serve as the Presiding Officer to conduct an informal adjudicatory hearing in the following proceeding:

General Electric Company, Vallecitos Nuclear Center

The hearing, if granted, will be conducted pursuant to 10 CFR Part 2, Subpart L, of the Commission's Regulations, ''Informal Hearing Procedures for Adjudications in Materials and Operator Licensing Proceedings.'' This proceeding concerns a request for hearing submitted by Tri-Valley CAREs, the Western States Legal Foundation, Save Our Sunol, and Citizens Along the Roads and Tracks. The request was filed in response to a notice of consideration by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission of a request for renewal of the 10 CFR Part 70 license for the General Electric Vallecitos Nuclear Center. The renewal application requests authorization to receive and possess special nuclear material and to use special nuclear material in research and development activities involving chemical and physical analysis. The notice of consideration of the renewal application and opportunity for hearing was published in the **Federal Register** at 64 FR 45,289 (Aug. 19, 1999).

The Presiding Officer in this proceeding is Administrative Judge Alan S. Rosenthal. Pursuant to the provisions of 10 CFR 2.722, 2.1209, Administrative Judge Thomas D. Murphy has been appointed to assist the Presiding Officer in taking evidence and in preparing a suitable record for review.

All correspondence, documents, and other materials shall be filed with Judge Rosenthal and Judge Murphy in accordance with 10 CFR 2.1203. Their addresses are:

Administrative Judge Alan S. Rosenthal, Presiding Officer, Atomic Safety and Licensing Board Panel, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555–0001

Administrative Judge Thomas D. Murphy, Special Assistant, Atomic Safety and Licensing Board Panel, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555–0001

Issued at Rockville, Maryland, this 15th day of December 1999.

G. Paul Bollwerk III,

Chief Administrative Judge, Atomic Safety and Licensing Board Panel.

[FR Doc. 99–33018 Filed 12–20–99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7590–01–P

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Draft Regulatory Guide; Issuance, Availability

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has issued for public comment a draft of a new guide in its Regulatory Guide Series. This series has been developed to describe and make available to the public such information as methods acceptable to the NRC staff for implementing specific parts of the NRC's regulations, techniques used by the staff in evaluating specific problems or postulated accidents, and data needed by the staff in its review of applications for permits and licenses.

The draft guide, temporarily identified by its task number, DG–1086