

dated March 16, 2018, the Southern Nuclear Operating Company (SNC) requested from the Commission an exemption to allow departures from Tier 1 information in the certified DCD incorporated by reference in 10 CFR part 52, appendix D, as part of license amendment request 17-042, "Tier 1 and Tier 2* Editorial and Consistency Changes."

For the reasons set forth in Section 3.2 of the NRC staff's Safety Evaluation that which can be found in ADAMS under Accession No. ML18106A638), the Commission finds that:

A. The exemption is authorized by law;

B. the exemption presents no undue risk to public health and safety;

C. the exemption is consistent with the common defense and security;

D. special circumstances are present in that the application of the rule in this circumstance is not necessary to serve the underlying purpose of the rule;

E. the special circumstances outweigh any decrease in safety that may result from the reduction in standardization caused by the exemption; and

F. the exemption will not result in a significant decrease in the level of safety otherwise provided by the design.

2. Accordingly, the licensee is granted an exemption from the certified DCD Tier 1 information, with corresponding changes to appendix C of the Facility Combined License, as described in the licensee's request dated November 30, 2017, as supplemented by the letter dated March 16, 2018. This exemption is related to, and necessary for, the granting of License Amendment No. 125 [for Unit 3 and No. 124 for Unit 4], which is being issued concurrently with this exemption.

3. As explained in Section 5.0 of the NRC staff's Safety Evaluation (ADAMS Accession No. ML18106A638), this exemption meets the eligibility criteria for categorical exclusion set forth in 10 CFR 51.22(c)(9). Therefore, pursuant to 10 CFR 51.22(b), no environmental impact statement or environmental assessment needs to be prepared in connection with the issuance of the exemption.

4. This exemption is effective as of the date of its issuance.

III. License Amendment Request

By letter dated November 30, 2017 (ADAMS Accession No. ML17334B211), the licensee requested that the NRC amend the COLs for VEGP, Units 3 and 4, COLs NPF-91 and NPF-92. The proposed amendment is described in Section I of this document.

The Commission has determined for these amendments that the application

complies with the standards and requirements of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended (the Act), and the Commission's rules and regulations. The Commission has made appropriate findings as required by the Act and the Commission's rules and regulations in 10 CFR chapter I, which are set forth in the license amendment.

A notice of consideration of issuance of amendment to facility operating license or COL, as applicable, proposed no significant hazards consideration determination, and opportunity for a hearing in connection with these actions, was published in the **Federal Register** on March 30, 2018 (83 FR 13796). No comments were received during the 30-day comment period.

The Commission has determined that these amendments satisfy the criteria for categorical exclusion in accordance with 10 CFR 51.22. Therefore, pursuant to 10 CFR 51.22(b), no environmental impact statement or environmental assessment need be prepared for these amendments.

IV. Conclusion

Using the reasons set forth in the combined safety evaluation, the staff granted the exemption and issued the amendment that the licensee requested on November 30, 2017.

The exemption and amendment were issued on May 31, 2018, as part of a combined package to the licensee (ADAMS Accession No. ML18106A626).

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 3rd day of August 2018.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Jennifer L. Dixon-Herrity,
Chief, Licensing Branch 4, Division of
Licensing, Siting, and Environmental
Analysis Office of New Reactors.

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NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[NRC-2018-0066]

Dry Storage and Transportation of High Burnup Spent Nuclear Fuel

AGENCY: Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

ACTION: Draft NUREG; request for comment.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is issuing for public comment a draft NUREG, NUREG-2224, "Dry Storage and Transportation of High Burnup Spent Nuclear Fuel." The draft NUREG provides technical background information applicable to high burnup spent nuclear fuel (HBU SNF), provides

an engineering assessment of recent NRC-sponsored mechanical testing of HBU SNF, and proposes example approaches for licensing and certification of HBU SNF in transportation and dry storage.

DATES: Submit comments on the draft NUREG-2224 by September 24, 2018. Comments received after this date will be considered if it is practical to do so, but the NRC is able to ensure consideration only for comments received on or before this date.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments by any of the following methods:

- **Federal Rulemaking Website:** Go to <http://www.regulations.gov> and search for Docket ID NRC-2018-0066. Address questions about NRC dockets to Jennifer Borges; telephone: 301-287-9127; email: Jennifer.Borges@nrc.gov. For technical questions, contact the individual listed in the **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** section of this document.

- **Mail comments to:** May Ma, Office of Administration, Mail Stop: TWFN-7-A60M, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001.

For additional direction on obtaining information and submitting comments, see "Obtaining Information and Submitting Comments" in the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section of this document.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Wendy Reed, Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards, telephone: 301-415-7213; email: Wendy.Reed@nrc.gov; U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Obtaining Information and Submitting Comments

A. Obtaining Information

Please refer to Docket ID NRC-2018-0066 when contacting the NRC about the availability of information for this action. You may obtain publicly-available information related to this action by any of the following methods:

- **Federal Rulemaking Website:** Go to <http://www.regulations.gov> and search for Docket ID NRC-2018-0066.
- **NRC's Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS):** You may obtain publicly-available documents online in the ADAMS Public Documents collection at <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html>. To begin the search, select "Begin Web-based ADAMS Search." For problems with ADAMS, please contact the NRC's Public Document Room (PDR) reference staff at 1-800-397-4209, 301-

415–4737, or by email to pdr.resource@nrc.gov. Draft NUREG–2224, “Dry Storage and Transportation of High Burnup Spent Nuclear Fuel,” is available in ADAMS under Accession No. ML18214A132

• *NRC’s PDR*: You may examine and purchase copies of public documents at the NRC’s PDR, Room O1–F21, One White Flint North, 11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland 20852.

B. Submitting Comments

Please include Docket ID NRC–2018–0066 in your comment submission.

The NRC cautions you not to include identifying or contact information that you do not want to be publicly disclosed in your comment submission. The NRC will post all comment submissions at <http://www.regulations.gov> as well as enter the comment submissions into ADAMS. The NRC does not routinely edit comment submissions to remove identifying or contact information.

If you are requesting or aggregating comments from other persons for submission to the NRC, then you should inform those persons not to include identifying or contact information that they do not want to be publicly disclosed in their comment submission. Your request should state that the NRC does not routinely edit comment submissions to remove such information before making the comment submissions available to the public or entering the comment into ADAMS.

II. Discussion

Historically, the potential for changes in the cladding performance of HBU SNF to compromise the analyzed fuel configuration in transportation packages and dry storage systems has been addressed through safety review guidance (Interim Staff Guidance (ISG)—11, Revision 3, “Cladding Considerations for the Transportation and Storage of Spent Fuel” (ADAMS Accession No. ML033230335); NUREG–1536, Revision 1, “Standard Review Plan for Spent Fuel Dry Storage Systems at a General License Facility” (ADAMS Accession No. ML101040620)). Time-dependent changes on the cladding performance of HBU SNF are primarily driven by the fuel’s temperature, rod internal pressure (and corresponding pressure-induced cladding hoop stresses), and the environment during dry storage or transport operations. ISG–11, Revision 3 and NUREG–1536, Revision 1 defines adequate fuel conditions, including peak cladding temperatures during short-term loading operations to prevent and mitigate degradation of the cladding.

Draft NUREG–2224, “Dry Storage and Transportation of High Burnup Spent Nuclear Fuel,” (ADAMS Accession No. ML18214A132) is a technical basis document which expands on the aspects of ISG–11, Rev. 3 and NUREG–1536, Rev. 1 that pertain to hydride reorientation in HBU SNF cladding. Hydride reorientation is a process in which the orientation of hydrides precipitated in HBU SNF cladding during reactor operation changes from the circumferential-axial to the radial-axial direction. Draft NUREG–2224 provides an engineering assessment of the results of NRC-sponsored research (NUREG/CR–7198, Rev. 1, “Mechanical Fatigue Testing of High-Burnup Fuel for Transportation Application,” ADAMS Accession No. ML17292B057) on the mechanical performance of HBU SNF following hydride reorientation; and per the conclusions of that assessment, presents example approaches for licensing and certification of HBU SNF for transportation (under part 71 of title 10 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (10 CFR), “Packaging and Transportation of Radioactive Material”) and dry storage (under 10 CFR part 72, “Licensing Requirements for the Independent Storage of Spent Nuclear Fuel and High-Level Radioactive Waste, and Reactor-Related Greater Than Class C Waste”).

The staff will review and consider public comments received on draft NUREG–2224 as it finalizes the guidance. The NRC is particularly seeking public comment on the following:

1. Are NRC’s assumptions regarding the performance of other cladding alloys based on data obtained from HBU SNF with Zircaloy-4 cladding for evaluating design basis drop accidents reasonable? If not, please explain why not.

2. Are the described licensing and certification approaches easy to follow and practical? If not, please explain why not.

3. Is the proposed approach for evaluation of vibration normally incident to transport clear? If not, please explain why not.

4. Are the discussions on consequence analyses due to hypothetical fuel reconfiguration clear and meaningful? If not, please explain why not.

5. Are there any potential conflicts between NUREG–2215, Standard Review Plan for Spent Fuel Dry Storage Systems and Facilities, Draft for Comment (ADAMS Accession No. ML17310A693) and this document? If so, please describe any conflicts.

6. Is the NRC’s reassessment of the ductility transition temperature as

measured by ring compression testing of defueled HBU SNF specimens reasonable? If not, please explain why not.

In answering the questions, please fully explain your answers. In addition, comments are invited on any areas of the draft report.

III. Public Meeting

The NRC will conduct a public meeting for the purpose of describing the draft NUREG and answering questions from the public. The NRC will publish a notice of the location, time, and agenda of the meeting on the NRC’s public meeting website at least 10 calendar days before the meeting. Stakeholders should monitor the NRC’s public meeting website for information about the public meeting at: <http://www.nrc.gov/public-involve/public-meetings/index.cfm>.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 3rd day of August 2018.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Michael C. Layton,

Director, Division of Spent Fuel Management, Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards.

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NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[Docket No. 040–08903; NRC–2018–0154]

Homestake Mining Company of California; Grants Reclamation Project; Groundwater Monitoring Plan

AGENCY: Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

ACTION: License amendment application; opportunity to request a hearing and to petition for leave to intervene.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) has received an application from the Homestake Mining Company of California (the licensee), for amendment of Materials License No. SUA–1471, which authorizes the possession of residual uranium and byproduct material in the form of uranium waste tailings and other byproduct waste generated by the licensee’s past milling operations at the licensee’s uranium mill located in Cibola County, New Mexico. The amendment would update the groundwater monitoring plan to adjust the compliance monitoring for the groundwater restoration areas at the Grants Reclamation Project site. This change to the groundwater monitoring plan should ensure that coverage is