

plant evolutions such as RCS pump starts and swapping operating charging pumps with the RCS in a water-solid condition.

Since application of ASME Code Case N-641 provides appropriate procedures to establish maximum postulated defects and to evaluate those defects in the context of establishing RPV P-T limits, this application of the Code Case maintains an adequate margin of safety for protecting RPV materials from brittle failure. Therefore, the licensee concluded that these considerations were special circumstances pursuant to 10 CFR 50.12(a)(2)(ii), "[a]pplication of the regulation in the particular circumstances would not serve the underlying purpose of the rule or is not necessary to achieve the underlying purpose of the rule."

In summary, the ASME section XI, Appendix G, procedure was conservatively developed based on the level of knowledge existing in 1974 concerning reactor coolant pressure boundary materials and the estimated effects of operation. Since 1974, the level of knowledge about the fracture mechanics behavior of RCS materials has been greatly expanded, especially regarding the effects of radiation embrittlement and the understanding of fracture toughness properties under static and dynamic loading conditions. The NRC staff concurs that this increased knowledge permits relaxation of the ASME section XI, Appendix G requirements by application of ASME Code Case N-641, while maintaining, pursuant to 10 CFR 50.12(a)(2)(ii), the underlying purpose of the ASME Code and the NRC regulations to ensure an acceptable margin of safety against brittle failure of the RPV.

The NRC staff has reviewed the exemption request submitted by the licensee and has concluded that an exemption should be granted to permit the licensee to utilize the provisions of ASME Code Case N-641 for the purpose of developing D.C. Cook, Unit 1, RPV P-T limit curves.

3.0 Discussion

Pursuant to 10 CFR 50.12, the Commission may, upon application by any interested person or upon its own initiative, grant exemptions from the requirements of 10 CFR part 50 when (1) the exemptions are authorized by law, will not present an undue risk to public health or safety, and are consistent with the common defense and security; and (2) when special circumstances are present.

Special circumstances, pursuant to 10 CFR 50.12(a)(2)(ii), are present in that continued operation of D.C. Cook, Unit

1, with the P-T curves developed in accordance with ASME section XI, Appendix G, without the relief provided by ASME Code Case N-641 is not necessary to achieve the underlying purpose of Appendix G to 10 CFR part 50. The underlying purpose of the regulations in Appendix G to 10 CFR part 50 is to provide an acceptable margin of safety against brittle failure of the RCS during any condition of normal operation to which the pressure boundary may be subjected over its service lifetime. Application of ASME Code Case N-641 in lieu of the requirements of ASME Code section XI, Appendix G provides an acceptable alternative methodology which will continue to meet the underlying purpose of Appendix G to 10 CFR part 50.

The NRC staff examined the licensee's rationale to support the exemption request, and agrees within the licensee's determination that an exemption would be required to approve the use of Code Case N-641. The NRC staff agrees that the use of ASME Code Case N-641 would meet the underlying intent of Appendix G to 10 CFR part 50. The NRC staff concludes that the application of the technical provisions of ASME Code Case N-641 provides sufficient margin in the development of RPV P-T limit curves such that the underlying purpose of the regulations (Appendix G to 10 CFR part 50) continue to be met so that the use of all provisions in Appendix G to section XI of the ASME Code are not necessary. Therefore, the NRC staff concludes that the exemption requested by the licensee is justified based on the special circumstances of 10 CFR part 50(a)(2)(ii), "[a]pplication of the regulation in the particular circumstances would not serve the underlying purpose of the rule or is not necessary to achieve the underlying purpose of the rule."

Based upon a consideration of the conservatism that is explicitly incorporated into the methodologies of Appendix G to 10 CFR part 50; Appendix G to section XI of the ASME Code; and Regulatory Guide 1.99, Revision 2; the staff concludes that application of ASME Code Case N-641 as described would provide an adequate margin of safety against brittle failure of the RPV. This is also consistent with the determination that the staff has reached for other licensees under similar conditions based on the same considerations. Therefore, the NRC staff concludes that requesting the exemption under the special circumstances of 10 CFR 50.12(a)(2)(ii) is appropriate, and that the methodology of Code Case N-

641 may be used to revise the P-T limits for the D.C. Cook, Unit 1, RPV.

4.0 Conclusion

Accordingly, the Commission has determined that, pursuant to 10 CFR 50.12(a), the exemption is authorized by law, will not present an undue risk to the public health and safety, and is consistent with the common defense and security. Also, special circumstances are present. Therefore, the Commission hereby grants the licensee an exemption from the requirements of 10 CFR 50.60 and 10 CFR part 50, Appendix G, to allow application of ASME Code Case N-641 in establishing TS requirements for the reactor vessel pressure limits at low temperatures for D.C. Cook, Unit 1.

Pursuant to 10 CFR 51.32, the Commission has determined that the granting of this exemption will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment (68 FR 42137).

This exemption is effective upon issuance.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 18th day of July 2003.

For The Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Ledyard B. Marsh,

Director, Division of Licensing Project Management, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation.

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NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[Docket No. 50-498 and 50-499]

STP Nuclear Operating Company; South Texas Project, Units 1 and 2; Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) is considering issuance of amendments to Facility Operating Licenses No. NPF-76 and NPF-80, issued to STP Nuclear Operating Company* (STPNOC) acting on behalf of itself and for Texas Genco, LP, the City Public Service Board of San Antonio (CPS), Central Power and Light Company (CPL), and the City of Austin, Texas (COA) (the licensees), dated March 31, 2003, (the licensee), for operation of the South Texas Project, Units 1 and 2 located in Matagorda County, Texas. Therefore, as required by

* STP Nuclear Operating Company is authorized to act for Texas Genco, LP, the City Public Service Board of San Antonio, Central Power and Light Company, and the City of Austin, Texas, and has exclusive responsibility and control over the physical construction, operation, and maintenance of the facility.

Section 10 CFR 51.21 of Title 10 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (10 CFR) Part 50, the Commission is issuing this environmental assessment and finding of no significant impact.

Environmental Assessment

Identification of the Proposed Action

The proposed action would revise Facility Operating Licenses No. NPF-76 and NPF-80, replacing "Central Power and Light Company (CPL)" with "AEP Texas Central Company" throughout the Operating License of each unit.

The proposed action is in accordance with the licensee's application dated March 31, 2003.

The Need for the Proposed Action

The application was submitted by STPNOC, acting on behalf of itself and for Texas Genco, LP, the City Public Service Board of San Antonio, Central Power and Light Company, and the City of Austin, Texas. The amendments change the operating license to reflect a change in the name of "Central Power and Light Company (CPL)," a licensed co-owner of the facility, to "AEP Texas Central Company (AEP)," effective December 23, 2002.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action

The Commission has completed its evaluation of the proposed action and changes to the licenses. We agree with the licensee that the name change will not impact the existing ownership of South Texas Project, Units 1 and 2 or the existing entitlement to power and will not alter the existing antitrust license conditions applicable to STPNOC's ability to comply with these conditions or with any of its other obligations or responsibilities. As stated by the licensee, "With the exception of this name change, this transaction does not in any way affect the qualifications of AEP Texas Central Company for ownership of 25.2% [percent] of South Texas Project Electric Generating Station Units 1 and 2 (STPEGS), nor does it involve any direct or indirect transfer of control of the STPEGS Operating Licenses." Therefore, the change will not increase the probability or consequences of accidents, no changes are being made in the types or amounts of any effluents that may be released off site, and there is no significant increase in occupational or public radiation exposure. Therefore, there are no significant radiological environmental impacts associated with the proposed action.

With regard to potential nonradiological impacts, the proposed

action does not affect nonradiological plant effluents and has no other environmental impact. Therefore, there are no significant nonradiological environmental impacts associated with the proposed action.

Accordingly, the Commission concludes that there are no significant nonradiological environmental impacts associated with the proposed action.

Environmental Impacts of the Alternatives to the Proposed Action

Since the Commission has concluded there is no measurable environmental impact associated with the proposed action, any alternatives with equal or greater environmental impact need not be evaluated. As an alternative to the proposed action, the staff considered denial of the proposed action. Denial of the application would result in no change in current environmental impacts. 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 different resources than those previously considered in the Final Environmental Statement for the South Texas Project, Units 1 and 2.

Agencies and Persons Consulted

On July 15, 2003, the staff consulted with the Texas State official, Arthur Tate of the Division of Compliance and Inspection, Texas Department of Health, Bureau of Radiation Control, regarding the environmental impact of the proposed action. The State official had no comments.

Finding of No Significant Impact

On the basis of the environmental assessment, the NRC concludes that the proposed action will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment. Accordingly, the NRC 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 application dated March 31, 2003. Documents may be examined, and/or copied for a fee, at the NRC's Public Document Room (PDR), located at One White Flint North, Public File Area O1 F21, 11555 Rockville Pike (first floor), Rockville, Maryland. Publicly available records will be accessible electronically from the Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS) Public Electronic Reading Room on the Internet at the NRC Web site, <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html>. Persons who do not have

access to ADAMS or who encounter problems in accessing the documents located in ADAMS, should contact the NRC PDR Reference staff by telephone at 1-800-397-4209 or 301-415-4737, or by e-mail at pdr@nrc.gov.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 18th day of July, 2003.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Robert A. Gramm,

Chief, Section 1, Project Directorate IV,
Division of Licensing Project Management,
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation.

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NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Workshop on Issues Related to the Level of Programmatic Information Needed in a Combined License Application; Submitted in Accordance With 10 CFR Part 52

AGENCY: Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

ACTION: Notice of August 25, 2003, public workshop.

SUMMARY: The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is holding a workshop on August 25, 2003, on issues related to the level of programmatic information that would be needed in order to issue a combined license (COL) in accordance with the requirements of Title 10 of the Code of Federal Regulations Part 52, Subpart C without inspections, tests, analyses, and acceptance criteria (ITAAC) for any particular program. The NRC staff has developed a draft proposal titled, "Use of Fire Protection as an Example Program to Discuss Programmatic Inspections, Tests, Analyses, and Acceptance Criteria," to address this issue. The NRC staff has scheduled the public workshop to discuss the issue and to solicit stakeholder comments on the staff's draft proposal. This workshop will be transcribed. To allow for timely registration on the day of the meeting, it is recommended that guests preregister for the workshop. To preregister for the workshop, contact Mr. Joseph Sebrosky (information provided below) and provide the following information: name, organization, phone number, and country of citizenship.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Joseph M. Sebrosky, New, Research and Test Reactors Program, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001.

Mr. Sebrosky may be reached by phone at 301-415-1132 or by e-mail at