Issued at Rockville, Maryland, this 30th day of August 2000.

G. Paul Bollwerk III,

Chief Administrative Judge, Atomic Safety and Licensing Board Panel.

[FR Doc. 00–22783 Filed 9–5–00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7590–01–P

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[DOCKET NO. 50–352]

Peco Energy Company; Limerick Generating Station, Unit 1; Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is considering issuance of an exemption from certain requirements of 10 CFR 50.60(a) for Facility Operating License No. NPF–39, issued to PECO Energy Company (PECO, or the licensee) for operation of the Limerick Generating Station, Unit 1 (Limerick Unit 1), located in Montgomery and Chester Counties in Pennsylvania.

Environmental Assessment

Identification of the Proposed Action

Appendix G to Title 10 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 50 (10 CFR Part 50, Appendix G), requires that pressure-temperature (P–T) limits be established for reactor pressure vessels (RPVs) during normal operating and hydrostatic or leak rate testing conditions. Specifically, 10 CFR Part 50, Appendix G, states, ''The appropriate requirements on both the pressure-temperature limits and the minimum permissible temperature must be met for all conditions.'' Appendix G of 10 CFR Part 50 specifies that the requirements for these limits are the American Society of Mechanical Engineers Boiler and Pressure Vessel Code (ASME Code), Section XI, Appendix G, limits.

To address provisions of amendments to the technical specifications' P–T limits, the licensee requested in its submittal dated May 15, 2000, as supplemented May 19, 2000, that the staff exempt Limerick Unit 1 from application of specific requirements of 10 CFR Part 50, Section 50.60(a) and Appendix G, and substitute use of ASME Code Cases N–588 and N–640. Code Case N–588 permits the postulation of a circumferentially-oriented flaw (in lieu of an axially-oriented flaw) for the evaluation of the circumferential welds in RPV P–T limit curves. Code Case N–640 permits the use of an alternate reference fracture toughness (K_{IC} fracture toughness curve instead of K_{IA} fracture toughness curve) for reactor vessel materials in determining the P–T limits. Since the pressure stresses on a circumferentially-oriented flaw are lower than the pressure stresses on an axially-oriented flaw by a factor of two, using Code Case N–588 for establishing the P–T limits would be less conservative than the methodology currently endorsed by 10 CFR Part 50, Appendix G, and therefore, an exemption to apply the Code Case would be required by 10 CFR 50.60. Likewise, since the K_{IC} fracture toughness curve shown in ASME Code, Section XI, Appendix A, Figure A–2200–1 (the K_{IC} fracture toughness curve) provides greater allowable fracture toughness than the corresponding K_{IA} fracture toughness curve of ASME Code, Section XI, Appendix G, Figure G–2210–1 (the K_{IA} fracture toughness curve), using Code Case N–640 for establishing the P–T limits would be less conservative than the methodology currently endorsed by 10 CFR Part 50, Appendix G, and therefore, an exemption to 10 CFR 50.60 to apply the Code Case would also be required.

The proposed action is in accordance with the licensee's application for exemption dated May 15, 2000, as supplemented May 19, 2000.

The Need for the Proposed Action

ASME Code Case N–640 is needed to revise the method used to determine the reactor coolant system (RCS) P–T limits, since continued use of the present curves unnecessarily restricts the P–T operating window. Since the RCS P–T operating window is defined by the P–T operating and test limit curves developed in accordance with the ASME Code, Section XI, Appendix G, procedure, continued operation of Limerick Unit 1 with these P–T curves without the relief provided by ASME Code Case N–640 would unnecessarily require the RPV to maintain a temperature exceeding 212 °F in a limited operating window during the pressure test. Consequently, steam vapor hazards would continue to be one of the safety concerns for personnel conducting inspections in primary containment. Implementation of the proposed P–T curves, as allowed by ASME Code Case N–640, does not significantly reduce the margin of safety and would eliminate steam vapor hazards by allowing inspections in primary containment to be conducted at a lower coolant temperature.

ASME Code Case N–588 allows a licensee to postulate a circumferential flaw in circumferential RPV welds in lieu of the axial flaw that is normally assumed to be present by the ASME Code, Section XI, Appendix G, analysis. The staff has determined that the assumption of an axial flaw in a circumferential RPV shell weld would provide an overly-conservative margin of safety on stress intensities resulting from the operating pressure, and that postulation of a circumferential flaw in the circumferential welds would continue to satisfy the margin of safety of two required by Appendix G to Section XI of the ASME Code.

In the requests for exemptions to use Code Cases N–588 and N–640, the staff has determined that, pursuant to 10 CFR 50.12(a)(2)(ii), the underlying purpose of the regulation will continue to be served by the implementation of these Code Cases.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action

The NRC has completed its evaluation of the proposed action and concludes that the exemption described above would provide an adequate margin of safety against brittle failure of the Limerick Unit 1 RPV.

The proposed action will not significantly increase the probability or consequences of accidents, no changes are being made in the types of any effluents that may be released offsite, 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 environmental impacts, the proposed action does not involve any historic sites. It does not affect nonradiological plant effluents and has no other environmental impacts. Therefore, there are no significant nonradiological impacts associated with the proposed action.

Accordingly, the NRC 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. 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

Statement for the Limerick Generating Station, Units 1and 2, dated April 1984.

Agencies and Persons Consulted

In accordance with its stated policy, on August 7, 2000, the staff consulted with the Pennsylvania State official, David Ney of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, 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 letter dated May 15, 2000, as supplemented by letter dated May 19, 2000, which are available for public inspection at the NRC Public Document Room, The Gelman Building, 2120 L Street, NW., Washington, DC. Publicly available records will be accessible electronically from the ADAMS Public Library component on the NRC Web site, *http://www.nrc.gov* (the Electronic Reading Room).

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 29th day of August, 2000.

For The Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Bartholomew C. Buckley,

Sr. Project Manager, Section 2, Project Directorate I, Division of Licensing Project Management, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation.

[FR Doc. 00–22781 Filed 9–5–00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7590–01–P

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Notice of a Public Meeting on Assessing Future Regulatory Research Needs

AGENCY: U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

ACTION: Notice of public meeting.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) will hold a second meeting of nuclear experts from the government, the nuclear industry, academia, and the public on Friday, September 15, 2000. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss and share stakeholder input on the role and future direction of nuclear regulatory research. The meeting is open to the public and all interested parties may attend.

DATES: The meeting will be held from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm on September 15, 2000 in the Georgetown Room of the Ramada Inn which is located at 1775 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland 20852. The telephone number of the hotel is 301–881–2300.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Questions with respect to this meeting should be referred to James W. Johnson, Office of Nuclear Regulatory Research, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission at (301) 415–6293; fax 301–415–5153; E-mail jwj@nrc.gov or Joseph J. Mate, at (301) 415–6202; fax 301–415–5153; E-mail *jjm@nrc.gov.*

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Adequate parking is available at the hotel at no cost. The hotel can also be reached by Metro. It is located one and one half blocks west of the Twinbrook Metro Stop on the Red Line. From the Metro station proceed west to the hotel on the Rockville Pike.

Seating for the public is limited and therefore will be on a first-come basis.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 30th day of August, 2000.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Ashok C. Thadani,

Director, Office of Nuclear Regulatory Research, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

[FR Doc. 00–22780 Filed 9–5–00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7590–01–P

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Sunshine Act Meetings

AGENCY HOLDING THE MEETING: Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

DATE: Weeks of September 4, 11, 18, 25, October 2, and 9, 2000.

PLACE: Commissioners' Conference Room, 11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland.

STATUS: Public and Closed.

MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED: Week of September 4

There are no meetings scheduled for the Week of September 4.

Week of September 11—Tentative

There are no meetings scheduled for the Week of September 11.

Week of September 18—Tentative

There are no meetings scheduled for the Week of September 18.

Week of September 25—Tentative

Friday, September 29

9:25 a.m. Affirmation Session (Public Meeting) (If needed)

9:30 a.m. Briefing on Risk-Informing Special Treatment Requirements (Public Meeting) (Contact: Tim Reed, 301–415–1462)

1:30 p.m. Briefing on Threat Environment Assessment (Closed-Ex. 1)

Week of October 2—Tentative

Friday, October 6

9:25 a.m. Affirmation Session (Public Meeting) (If needed)

9:30 a.m. Meeting with ACRS (Public Meeting) (Contact: John Larkins, 301–415–7360)

Week of October 9—Tentative

There are no meetings scheduled for the Week of October 9.

The Schedule for Commission meetings is subject to change on short notice. To verify the status of meetings call (Recording)—(301) 415–1292.

CONTACT PERSON FOR MORE INFORMATION: Bill Hill (301) 415–1661.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: By a vote of 5–0 on August 30, the Commission determined pursuant to U.S.C. 552b(e) and § 9.107(a) of the Commission's rules that ''Affirmation of VERMONT YANKEE NUCLEAR POWER CORP & AMERGEN VERMONT, LOC (Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Station), Docket No. 50–271–LT; Citizens Awareness Network's (''CAN'') Motion to Stay the Effectiveness of NRC Staff's July 7th Order Approving License Transfer (July 14, 2000)'' be held on August 30, and on less than one week's notice to the public.

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The NRC Commission Meeting Schedule can be found on the Internet at: http://www.nrc.gov/SECY/smj/schedule.htm.

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This notice is distributed by mail to several hundred subscribers; if you no longer wish to receive it, or would like to be added to it, please contact the Office of the Secretary, Attn: Operations Branch, Washington, DC 20555 (301–415–1661). In addition, distribution of this meeting notice over the Internet system is available. If you are interested in receiving this Commission meeting schedule electronically, please send an electronic message to wmh@nrc.gov or dkw@nrc.gov.

Dated: September 1, 2000.

William M. Hill, Jr.,

SECY Tracking Officer, Office of the Secretary.

[FR Doc. 00–22970 Filed 9–1–00; 2:17 pm]

BILLING CODE 7590–01–M