Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 275 hours.

Frequency of Collection: One time. Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of information collection, including suggestions for reducing the burden to: Jaleh Behroozi Soroui, National Institute for Literacy, 800 Connecticut Ave., NW, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20006, and Wendy Taylor, Office of Management and Budget, Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, 725 17th St., NW, Washington, DC 20503.

Carolyn Staley,

Deputy Director, NIFL.

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NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[Docket 40–7580]

Finding of No Significant Impact and Notice of Opportunity for a Hearing; Amendment of Source Materials License SMB–911 Fansteel, Inc., Muskogee, Oklahoma

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission is considering the amendment of Source Materials License SMB–911 for the recovery of Work in Progress (WIP) pond residues at the Fansteel, Inc., plant located in Muskogee, Oklahoma. The amendment will allow the facility to process on-site pond residues to recover rare earth metals and to reduce the volume of on-site radioactive materials. The Commission has determined not to prepare an environmental impact statement for the proposed action, because the amendment will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment for reasons described in the Environmental Assessment.

Summary of the Environmental Assessment

Background

Fansteel, Inc. (Fansteel) has been licensed by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) to possess and use source materials at the Muskogee plant since January 1967. The current license expired in July 1994; however, Fansteel submitted a renewal application on June 20, 1994. In accordance with the timely renewal provision of 10 CFR 40.43(b), the existing license continues to be effective until the application for renewal has been finally determined by the Commission. The NRC plans to complete the renewal action on Fansteel's license, including an Environmental Assessment, after action on this amendment application is completed.

Fansteel, Inc. had previously processed ore concentrates and tin slags in the production of refined tantalum products at their Muskogee site. A residue containing natural uranium and thorium was generated as a result of the initial hydrofluoric acid digestion of the ore concentrates. This residue is considered source material, and is regulated under the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 and defined in 10 CFR Part 40, because it contains more than 0.05% by weight of uranium and thorium. Since significant quantities of tantalum remained in the residue after initial extraction, as well as other rare earth elements and fluoride, the residues were designated by Fansteel as WIP material suitable for secondary processing. Approximately 9,000 dry tons of WIP material have accumulated in ponds numbered 2, 3, and 5.

Identification of the Proposed Action

The proposed action is to amend the Source Materials License SMB–911 to allow Fansteel to retrieve and process WIP material from the on-site ponds. The WIP process will isolate the radioactivity such that the bulk of the WIP material can be used commercially while minimizing the volume of material sent for radioactive waste disposal.

Processing of the WIP material will recover tantalum, columbium (niobium), and scandium from the pond residues. This WIP material recovery will be achieved by a series of proprietary chemical processes to separate the remaining tantalum, columbium, and scandium from the residues. Uranium and thorium will be separated from the other products as uranium and thorium hydroxides. Waste materials from this process contaminated with natural uranium and thorium will be packaged and stored for offsite disposal.

The Need for the Proposed Action

The current license allows Fansteel to possess, use, store, and transfer natural uranium and thorium and their progenies in metal processing residues. The license allows the possession of a maximum of 30,000 kilograms of uranium and 67,000 kilograms of thorium in solid forms as oxides in tin slag and ore processing residues. The license amendment is needed to allow Fansteel to process the pond residues.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action

Treatment of pond residues will result in effluents of radioactive materials to air and water from the Fansteel plant, which may produce a small increase in radiation doses to the public.

The WIP process will generate gases and particulates that will be captured in a centrifugal particulate separator followed by water and caustic scrubbing before discharge to the atmosphere. The treated stack effluent will be continuously monitored for gross alpha radioactivity.

Liquid effluents will be collected and treated with lime, then pumped to Ponds 8 and 9 for settling prior to discharge through Outfall 001.

The estimated total effective dose equivalent from inhalation of radionuclides emitted during WIP processing is less than 1 millirem per year to a hypothetical resident located at the site boundary in the most frequent downwind direction. The proposed amendment will not have an adverse impact on the air quality for the region beyond the contribution from currently licensed activities.

Treated wastewater will be discharged through Outfall 001 to the Arkansas River. Ingestion of water discharged to the Arkansas River would result in doses much less than 5 millirem per year, due to the low concentration of radionuclides in the discharge. Actual dose would be much less, because the effluent, approximately 100,000 gallons per day, is further diluted by the Arkansas River flow of 20,600 cubic feet per second (13 billion gallons per day).

By comparison, the total body dose rate to an individual in the vicinity of the Muskogee plant from background sources has been estimated at 107 millirems per year, not considering fallout radiation sources or radon, including 43.4 mrem/yr from cosmic rays, 45.6 mrem/yr from terrestrial sources, and 18 mrem/yr from internal emitters.

Background uranium concentrations in soil are typically 1.0 to 1.5 micrograms per gram, which is equivalent to 0.33 to 0.50 picocuries per gram. The WIP processing is not expected to result in an increase in soil radioactivity, because no radioactive materials will be released to soils during processing.

The proposed license amendment will not have an adverse impact on surface or ground water quality. In fact, there is expected to be a potential benefit, since the removal of source material in the ponds will reduce the potential for ground water and surface water

contamination in the future. Remediation of past ground water contamination from a pond leak in 1989 will continue under the provisions of the renewed license.

The proposed license amendment will not result in any adverse environmental impacts which could affect terrestrial and aquatic biota.

Accidents

The Environmental Report considered the potential for accidents at the Muskogee plant. Material which could leak from tanks, pumps, or pipes would be confined within the dissolution building. Pipe leaks could lead to slurry's being leaked onto the ground surface. Such accidents would be readily identified and cleaned up and would represent no significant radiological impacts. Process chemicals, including hydrochloric acid, sodium hydroxide, sulfuric acid, and potassium hydroxide, are stored in tanks within diked areas to contain any leaks.

Transportation accidents represent a low radiological risk because outgoing shipments of radioactive waste will be packaged in drums or bags and transported in accordance with the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) regulations. Transportation accidents could result in spilled radioactive material that is readily cleaned up. Furthermore, the low-activity materials that will be produced by the WIP process do not represent a significant hazard during transport.

For soil or liquid transport, the accidental release of stored WIP was considered worst case because of its associated radioactivity. Rather than attempt to quantify this potential exposure, it was assumed that its transport off-site via the river posed an unacceptable risk to the public. The existing drainage and sump systems for the Chem A and Chem C process buildings have thus been incorporated into the existing WIP process design. The sump system includes a sump capable of holding more than the total quantity of WIP that will be present in the building at any given time. This system has sufficient capacity to preclude any transport of liquids or slurries away from the immediate process areas.

Transportation of nonradioactive industrial chemicals represents an accident risk; however, these shipments do not pose any unique transportation hazards beyond those associated with nonnuclear facilities using similar chemicals. All shipments of industrial chemicals to the Muskogee plant will be transported in accordance with U.S. DOT and state and local laws.

Natural phenomena, such as tornadoes, earthquakes, flooding, and fire, have also been considered. The probability of a tornado striking the plant is 1.8×10^{-3} per year; this could result in dispersion of material from the drum storage area, the milling room, the waste holding ponds, and the digestion building. The Fansteel plant is located in a quiet seismic region considered to be of minor seismic risk. The site is located above the Arkansas River floodplain. Fansteel will describe how it intends to address NRC guidance with respect to fire prevention, detection, and suppression prior to startup of the WIP processing facility.

Monitoring Programs

Monitoring programs have been developed to assure that there will not be any undetected release of radioactivity from the Fansteel site during the recovery and processing of WIP material.

Gases from the calciner in building Chem A will be exhausted through a common duct into a wet scrubber that exhausts through a vertical stack to the atmosphere. The stack is equipped with a continuous radiation monitor. The process ventilation systems and gaseous effluent control equipment are designed and will be operated in accordance with the standard engineering practice. Operational checks on these systems will be performed as part of the standard operating procedures. Stack emissions will be controlled and sampled on a 24-hour basis when operating.

Atmospheric effluents will be controlled through the use of wet scrubbers. Scrubber liquids will be treated through the wastewater treatment system, with the ground water collection system, laboratory, deionized water, and chemical processing wastewaters, and discharged to the Arkansas River through Outfall 001. Gross α and gross β analyses are performed on a continuous water sample at the effluent monitoring station when the station is in operation. This outfall is also monitored for nonradiological parameters in accordance with the NPDES permit.

Fansteel also monitors 25 ground water wells; depth, pH, fluoride, ammonia, total dissolved solids, specific conductivity, and gross α and gross β are measured monthly. This data is recorded and maintained as permanent records.

Fansteel has committed to take certain actions if specified radioactivity concentrations (action levels) for the Outfall 001 effluent and ground water analyses are exceeded. These action levels are related to EPA drinking water standards for radionuclides in 40 CFR Part 141 and to NRC effluent limits in 10 CFR Part 20.

Alternatives to the Proposed Action

If the license amendment application is denied, Fansteel will be prohibited from processing the pond residues, and will be required to decommission the plant site without recovering the metals and rare earth elements. This would require treatment and/or disposal of large quantities of process residues. Such a denial would likely result in either removal of the pond residues and disposal in a low-level radioactive waste disposal facility or onsite disposal of the residues.

Agencies and Persons Consulted

The Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality, Hazards Management and Waste Services, Radiation Control Program, Water Quality Division.

Conclusion

The NRC has determined that issuance of the amendment to allow Fansteel to process the pond residues will not result in a significant impact to human health and the environment.

Finding of No Significant Impact

The NRC has prepared an Environmental Assessment related to the amendment of Source Materials License SMB–911. On the basis of this assessment, NRC has concluded that environmental impacts that would be created by the proposed licensing action would not be significant and do not warrant the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement. Accordingly, it has been determined that a finding of no significant impact is appropriate.

The Environmental Assessment, the license amendment application, and other documents related to this proposed action are available for public inspection and copying at the Commission's public document room in NRC's Region IV office, Harris Tower, 611 Ryan Plaza Drive, Suite 400, Arlington, Texas 76011–8064, and in NRC's headquarters public document room, Gelman Building, 2120 L St., NW., Washington, DC 20037.

Opportunity for a Hearing

Any person whose interest may be affected by the amendment of this license may file a request for a hearing. Any request for hearing must be filed with the Office of the Secretary, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555, within 30 days

of the publication of this notice in the Federal Register; must be served on the NRC staff (Executive Director for Operations, One White Flint North, 11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville, MD 20852) and on the licensee (Fansteel, Inc., Number Ten Tantalum Place, Muskogee, OK 74401); and must comply with the requirements for requesting a hearing set forth in the Commission's regulation 10 CFR Part 2, Subpart L, ''Informal Hearings Procedures for Adjudications in Materials Licensing Proceedings.''

These requirements, which the requestor must address in detail, are:

1. The interest of the requestor in the proceeding;

2. How that interest may be affected by the results of the proceeding, including the reasons why the requestor should be permitted a hearing;

3. The requestor's area of concern about the licensing activity that is the subject matter of the proceeding; and

4. The circumstances establishing that the request for hearing is timely, that is, filed within 30 days of the date of this notice.

In addressing how the requestor's interest may be affected by the proceeding, the request should describe the nature of the requestor's right under the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended, to be made a party to the proceeding; the nature and extent of the requestor's property, financial, or other (e.g., health, safety) interest in the proceeding; and the possible effect of any order that may be entered in the proceeding upon the requestor's interest.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 17th day of June 1996.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Robert C. Pierson,

Chief, Licensing Branch, Division of Fuel Cycle Safety and Safeguards, NMSS.

[FR Doc. 96–15989 Filed 6–21–96; 8:45 am]

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Docket Nos. 50–272 and 50–311]

Public Service Electric and Gas Company; Notice of Consideration of Issuance of Amendment To Facility Operating License, Proposed No Significant Hazards Consideration Determination, and Opportunity for a Hearing

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) is considering issuance of an amendment to Facility Operating License Nos. DPR–70 and DPR–75 issued to Public Service Electric & Gas Company (the licensee) for operation of Salem Nuclear Generating Station, Units 1 and 2, located in Salem County, New Jersey.

The proposed amendments would revise Technical Specification 3/4.7.6, ''Control Room Emergency Air Conditioning System [CREACS],'' to reflect a control room design in which the common Salem Unit 1 and Unit 2 control room envelope is supplied by 2 one-hundred percent capable Control Room Emergency Air Conditioning System trains.

Before issuance of the proposed license amendment, the Commission will have made findings required by the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended (the Act) and the Commission's regulations.

The Commission has made a proposed determination that the amendment request involves no significant hazards consideration. Under the Commission's regulations in 10 CFR 50.92, this means that operation of the facility in accordance with the proposed amendment would not (1) involve a significant increase in the probability or consequences of an accident previously evaluated; or (2) create the possibility of a new or different kind of accident from any accident previously evaluated; or (3) involve a significant reduction in a margin of safety. As required by 10 CFR 50.91(a), the licensee has provided its analysis of the issue of no significant hazards consideration, which is presented below:

1. The proposed change does not involve a significant increase in the probability or consequences of an accident previously evaluated.

CREACS ensures adequate protection after an accident and is not an accident initiator. The changes to the emergency operating mode and configuration of the CREACS, while modifying the control room dose assessment, do not affect the probability of an accident.

The proposed operation of the CREACS in the pressurization mode at the initiation of an accident will reduce overall operator doses from such an event and will ensure that the requirements of General Design Criterion (GDC) 19 will be met. Operation in the recirculation mode to mitigate the consequences of a fire or a toxic release, if necessary, or as a compensatory measure when receiving ammonium hydroxide does not significantly increase the consequences of other accidents due to the short duration of these events, the ability to re-align the system to the pressurization mode manually, and the suspension of Core Alterations or fuel movement.

The CREACS as modified satisfies [technical specification] TS Bases 3.7.6. The CREACS ensures that (1) the ambient air temperature does not exceed the allowable temperature for continuous duty rating for equipment and instrumentation cooled by the CREACS and (2) the Control Room will remain habitable for operations personnel during and following all credible accident conditions.

The proposed changes reflect the commonality of the Salem Unit 1 and Unit 2 [common room envelope] CRE and the supporting CREACS trains by adopting the guidance for required actions, allowed outage times, and testing provided in the [Standard Technical Specification] STS.

Therefore, the proposed TS change does not involve a significant increase in the probability or consequences of an accident previously evaluated.

2. The proposed change does not create the possibility of a new or different kind of accident from any accident previously evaluated.

The establishment of the CREACS as a shared system for both Units 1 and 2 will not result in a new accident release scenario. The upgraded CREACS reflected by this submittal revises the emergency operating mode from the original recirculation mode to a pressurization mode in the event of a radiological emergency. This change in CREACS operating philosophy is in support of compliance with the limits of GDC 19. Modifications to the Salem control rooms regarding the controlled atmospheric boundary configuration and how the configuration is maintained cannot result in new accident scenarios.

Therefore, the proposed TS change does not create the possibility of a new or different kind of accident from any accident previously evaluated.

3. The proposed change does not involve a significant reduction in a margin of safety.

The proposed changes support modifications to the CREACS as part of corrective actions identified in Licensee Event Reports with the intent of compliance with General Design Criterion 19 limits. The changes do no[t] impact the existing safety analyses while retaining and meeting current requirements and General Design Criteria limitations and gaining a redundancy in the affected system. The modified CREACS meets the TS Bases 3.7.6 requirements. CREACS ensures that (1) the ambient air temperature does not exceed the allowable temperature for continuous duty rating for equipment and instrumentation cooled by the CREACS and (2) the Control Room will remain habitable for operations personnel during and following all credible accident conditions. This clarification of the CREACS operability requirements and the application of more conservative requirements to Unit 1 will result in a net increase to operator safety.

Therefore, the proposed TS change does not involve a significant reduction in the margin of safety.

The NRC staff has reviewed the licensee's analysis and, based on this review, it appears that the three standards of 10 CFR 50.92(c) are satisfied. Therefore, the NRC staff proposes to determine that the amendment request involves no significant hazards consideration.

The Commission is seeking public comments on this proposed determination. Any comments received within 30 days after the date of