

—Adjourn

Marta Cehelsky,

Executive Officer.

[FR Doc. 97-10994 Filed 4-24-97; 11:54 am]

BILLING CODE 7555-01-M

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Public Forum on Passive Grade Crossing Safety

In connection with its investigation of the issues concerning the safety of passive grade crossings, where railroads and highways meet without gates or warning lights, the National Transportation Safety Board will convene a public forum beginning at 9:30 a.m., on Thursday, May 8, 1997, at the Jacksonville Hilton Hotel, 1201 Riverplace Boulevard, Jacksonville, Florida. For more information, contact Shelly Hazle, Office of Public Affairs, Washington, D.C. 20594, telephone (202) 314-6100.

This meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Michelle Prentice 404-562-1659 (voice) or 404-562-1674 (fax), at least 5 days prior to the public forum date.

Dated: April 23, 1997.

Bea Hardesty,

Federal Register Liaison Officer.

[FR Doc. 97-10804 Filed 4-25-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7533-01-P

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Agency Information Collection Activities: Proposed Collection; Comment Request

AGENCY: U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC).

ACTION: Notice of pending NRC action to submit an information collection request to OMB and solicitation of public comment.

SUMMARY: The NRC is preparing a submittal to OMB for review of continued approval of information collections under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. Chapter 35).

Information pertaining to the requirement to be submitted:

1. *The title of the information collection:*

NRC Form 171, "Paper to Paper Duplication Request"

NRC Form 171A, "Multi-Media Duplication Request"

NRC Form 171B, "Microform to Paper Request"

2. *Current OMB approval number:* 3150-0066.

3. *How often the collection is required:* On occasion.

4. *Who is required or asked to report:* Individuals or companies requesting copies to be made by reproduction.

5. *The number of annual respondents:* 18,300.

6. *The number of hours needed annually to complete the requirement or request:* 1,208 hours (18,300 forms X .066 hr/form) or about 4 minutes per form.

7. *Abstract:* These forms are utilized by individual members of the public to request reproduction of publicly available documents in NRC's Headquarters Public Document Room (PDR). Copies of the form are utilized by the reproduction contractor to accompany the orders and are then discarded.

Submit, by June 27, 1997, comments that address the following questions:

1. Is the proposed collection of information necessary for the NRC to properly perform its functions? Does the information have practical utility?

2. Is the burden estimate accurate?

3. Is there a way to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected?

4. How can the burden of the information collection be minimized, including the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology?

A copy of the draft supporting statement may be viewed free of charge at the NRC Public Document Room, 2120 L Street NW, (lower level), Washington, DC. Members of the public who are in the Washington, DC, area can access this document via modem on the Public Document Room Bulletin Board (NRC's Advanced Copy Document Library), NRC subsystem at FedWorld, 703-321-3339. Members of the public who are located outside of the Washington, DC, area can dial FedWorld, 1-800-303-9672, or use the FedWorld Internet address:

fedworld.gov (Telnet). The document will be available on the bulletin board for 30 days after the signature date of this notice. If assistance is needed in accessing the document, please contact the FedWorld help desk at 703-487-4608. Additional assistance in locating the document is available from the NRC Public Document Room, nationally at 1-800-397-4209, or within the Washington, DC, area at 202-634-3273.

Comments and questions about the information collection requirements

may be directed to the NRC Clearance Officer, Brenda Jo. Shelton, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, T-6 F33, Washington, DC, 20555-0001, or by telephone at (301) 415-7233, or by Internet electronic mail at BJS1@NRC.GOV.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 21st day of April, 1997.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Arnold E. Levin,

Acting Designated Senior Official for Information Resources Management.

[FR Doc. 97-10863 Filed 4-25-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7590-01-P

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[Docket No. 50-255]

Consumers Power Company; Palisades Plant; Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) is considering issuance of an exemption from certain requirements of 10 CFR 73.55 for Facility Operating License No. DPR-20, issued to Consumers Power Company, (the licensee), for operation of the Palisades Plant located in Van Buren County, Michigan.

Environmental Assessment

Identification of the Proposed Action

The proposed action would exempt the licensee from certain requirements of 10 CFR 73.55, "Requirements for physical protection of licensed activities in nuclear power reactors against radiological sabotage." The proposed action would allow implementation of a hand geometry biometric system of site access control such that photograph identification badges can be taken off site.

This environmental assessment has been prepared to address potential environmental issues related to the licensee's application of April 4, 1996.

The Need for the Proposed Action

Pursuant to 10 CFR 73.55, paragraph (a), The licensee shall establish and maintain an onsite physical protection system and security organization.

Paragraph (1) of 10 CFR 73.55(d), "Access Requirements," specifies that "licensee shall control all points of personnel and vehicle access into a protected area." It is specified in 10 CFR 73.55(d)(5) that "A numbered picture badge identification system shall be used for all individuals who are authorized access to protected areas

without escort." It also states that an individual not employed by the licensee (i.e., contractors) may be authorized access to protected areas without escort provided the individual "receives a picture badge upon entrance into the protected area which must be returned upon exit from the protected area."

* * *

Currently, unescorted access into the protected areas of the Palisades Nuclear Plant is controlled through the use of a photograph on a combination badge and keycard (hereafter, referred to as badges). The security officers at the entrance station use the photograph on the badge to visually identify the individual requesting access. The badges for both licensee employees and contractor personnel who have been granted unescorted access are issued upon entrance at the entrance/exit location and are returned upon exit. The badges are stored and retrievable at the entrance/exit location. In accordance with 10 CFR 73.55(d)(5), contractor individuals are not allowed to take badges off site. In accordance with the plant's physical security plans, neither licensee employees nor contractors are allowed to take badges off site.

The licensee proposes to implement an alternative unescorted access control system that would eliminate the need to issue and retrieve badges at the entrance/exit location and would allow all individuals with unescorted access to keep their badges with them when departing the site.

An exemption from certain requirements of 10 CFR 73.55(d)(5) is required to permit contractors to take their badges off site instead of returning them when exiting the site.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action

The Commission has completed its evaluation of the proposed action and concludes that the proposed exemption would not increase the probability or consequences of accidents previously analyzed and the proposed exemption would not affect facility radiation levels or facility radiological effluents. Under the proposed system, each individual who is authorized for unescorted entry into protected areas would have the physical characteristics of his/her hand (hand geometry) registered with his/her badge number in the access control system. When an individual enters the badge into the card reader and places the hand on the measuring surface, the system would record the individual's hand image. The unique characteristics of the extracted hand image would be compared with the previously stored template to verify authorization for

entry. Individuals, including licensee employees and contractors, would be allowed to keep their badges with them when they depart the site.

The licensee stated that the hand geometry equipment selected for use will meet the detection probability of 90 percent with a 95-percent confidence level in accordance with Regulatory Guide 5.44, "Perimeter Intrusion Alarm Systems." This detection probability indicates that the false acceptance rate of the proposed hand geometry system will be comparable to that of the current system. Based on a Sandia report entitled "A Performance Evaluation of Biometric Identification Devices" (SAND91-0276 UC-906 Unlimited Release, printed June 1991), and on its experience with the current photo-identification system, the licensee stated that the use of the badges with the hand geometry system would enhance the overall effectiveness of the security program. Since both the badge and hand geometry would be necessary for access into the protected area, the proposed system would provide for a positive verification process. Potential loss of a badge by an individual, as a result of taking the badge off site, would not enable an unauthorized entry into protected areas. The licensee will implement a process for testing the proposed system to ensure continued overall level of performance equivalent to that specified in the regulation. The Physical Security Plan for Palisades will be revised to include implementation and testing of the hand geometry access control system and to allow licensee employees and contractors to take their badges off site.

All other access processes, including search function capability and access revocation, will remain the same. A security officer responsible for access control will continue to be positioned within a bullet-resistant structure. A numbered picture badge identification system will continue to be used for all individuals who are authorized access to protected areas without escorts. Badges will continue to be displayed by all individuals while inside the protected area. The proposed system is only for individuals with authorized unescorted access and will not be used for individuals requiring escorts.

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 the allowable individual or cumulative occupational radiation exposure.

Accordingly, the Commission concludes that there are no significant radiological

environmental impacts associated with the proposed action.

With regard to potential nonradiological impacts, the proposed action involves features located entirely within the restricted area as defined in 10 CFR Part 20. It does not affect nonradiological plant effluents and has no other environmental impact. Accordingly, the Commission concludes that there are no significant nonradiological environmental impacts associated with the proposed action.

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 NRC 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 resources not previously considered in the Final Environmental Statement for Palisades dated June 1972.

Agencies and Persons Consulted

In accordance with its stated policy, on March 28, 1997, the NRC staff consulted with the Michigan State official, Dennis Hahn, of the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, Drinking Water and Radiological Protection Division, regarding the environmental impact of the proposed action. The State official had no comments.

Finding of No Significant Impact

Based upon 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 April 4, 1996, which is available for public inspection at the Commission's Public Document Room, The Gelman Building, 2120 L Street, NW., Washington, DC, and at the local public document room located at the Van Wylen Library, Hope College, Holland, Michigan 49423.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 9th day of April 1997.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission .
Robert G. Schaaf,
*Project Manager, Project Directorate III-1,
 Division of Reactor Projects—III/IV, Office of
 Nuclear Reactor Regulation.*
 [FR Doc. 97-10864 Filed 4-25-97; 8:45 am]
 BILLING CODE 7590-01-P

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[Docket No. 40-8698]

Plateau Resources Limited

AGENCY: Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

ACTION: Final finding of no significant impact notice of opportunity for hearing.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) proposes to renew NRC Source Material License SUA-1371 to authorize the licensee, Plateau Resources Limited (PRL), to resume commercial milling operations at the Shootaring Canyon uranium mill, located near Ticaboo, Utah. An Environmental Assessment was performed by the NRC staff in accordance with the requirements of 10 CFR Part 51. The conclusion of the Environmental Assessment is a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the proposed licensing action.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. James R. Park, Uranium Recovery Branch, Mail Stop TWFN 7-J9, Division of Waste Management, Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555. Telephone 301/415-6699.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Source Material License SUA-1371 was originally issued by NRC on September 21, 1979, pursuant to Title 10, Code of Federal Regulations (10 CFR), Part 40, "Domestic Licensing of Source Material." This license currently authorizes PRL to possess byproduct material in the form of uranium waste tailings and other byproduct wastes which were generated by its uranium recovery operations previously authorized under SUA-1371. Under the current license, PRL is not authorized to produce uranium concentrates. The tailings and wastes referred to above were generated during the three months in 1982 in which the mill was operated; the mill has been on standby status since that time. SUA-1371 was renewed for "possession only" status in 1986.

By amended license renewal application dated March 1, 1996, PRL

requested authorization to resume operations at the Shootaring Canyon mill.

Summary of the Environmental Assessment

The NRC staff performed an appraisal of the environmental impacts associated with the resumption of operations at the Shootaring Canyon mill, in accordance with 10 CFR Part 51, Licensing and Regulatory Policy Procedures for Environmental Protection. In conducting its appraisal, the NRC staff considered the following: (1) Information contained in previous environmental evaluations of the Shootaring Canyon project; (2) information contained in PRL's license renewal application; (3) information contained in PRL's license amendment requests submitted subsequent to its renewal application, and NRC staff approvals of such requests; (4) land use and environmental monitoring reports; and (5) information derived from NRC staff site visits and inspections of the Shootaring Canyon mill site and from communications with PRL, the State of Utah Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), and the National Park Service. The results of the staff's appraisal are documented in an Environmental Assessment. The radiation safety aspects for the resumption of operations at the mill are discussed in a Safety Evaluation Report.

The license renewal would authorize PRL to resume operating the Shootaring Canyon mill, at a maximum production rate of 1,004,000 pounds of yellowcake per year, and to possess byproduct material in the form of uranium waste tailings and other uranium byproduct wastes generated by the milling operations authorized by the renewal license. The actual resumption of operations will be conditional on (1) The approval of a final design for the tailings impoundment liner by NRC and the Utah DEQ and the installation of that liner, (2) PRL's submittal of a technical evaluation of the existing cross-valley berm and tailings dam, and (3) NRC's confirmation during a pre-operational site inspection that standard operating procedures for operational and non-operational activities are in place.

All conditions in the renewal license and commitments presented in the licensee's license renewal application are subject to NRC inspection. Violation of the license may result in enforcement action.

Conclusions

The NRC staff has reexamined actual and potential environmental impacts

associated with a resumption of yellowcake production at the mill site, and has determined that renewal of the source material license (1) Will be consistent with requirements of 10 CFR Part 40, (2) will not be inimical to the public health and safety, and (3) will not have long-term detrimental impacts on the environment. The following statements support the FONSI and summarize the conclusions resulting from the staff's environmental assessment:

1. An acceptable environmental sampling program will be in place to monitor effluent releases and to detect if appropriate limits are exceeded;
2. The licensee will implement an intensive, routine inspection program of the mill process building, associated facilities, and tailings retention impoundments, and conduct an annual "as low as is reasonable achievable" (ALARA) audit program;
3. Standard operating procedures will be in place for all operational process activities involving radioactive materials that are handled, processed, or stored;
4. Mill tailings and process liquid effluents from the mill circuit will be discharged to a multi-lined tailings impoundment, with a leak detection system;
5. The licensee will implement an acceptable groundwater detection monitoring program to ensure compliance with the requirements of 10 CFR Part 40, Appendix A;
6. The licensee will conduct site decommissioning and reclamation activities in accordance with NRC-approved plans; and
7. Because the staff has determined that there will be no significant impacts associated with approval of the license renewal, there can be no disproportionately high and adverse effects or impacts on minority and low-income populations. Consequently, further evaluation of 'Environmental Justice' concerns, as outlined in Executive Order 12898 and NRC's Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards Policy and Procedures Letter 1-50, Rev.1, is not warranted.

Alternatives to the Proposed Action

The proposed action is to renew NRC Source Material License SUA-1371, for a resumption of operations at the Shootaring Canyon mill, as requested by PRL. Therefore, the principal alternatives available to NRC are to:

- (1) Renew the license with such conditions as are considered necessary or appropriate to protect public health and safety and the environment; or
- (2) Deny renewal of the license.