

accessibility, parking, ground transportation, and hours of operation, particularly evening and weekend hours;

(6) The proximity of the library to existing user groups of the collection, if known.

Comment period expires July 8, 1997. Written comments may be submitted to Mr. David Meyer, Chief, Regulatory Publications Branch, Office of Administration, U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555. Copies of comments received may be examined at the NRC Public Document Room, Gelman Building, 2120 L Street NW, Washington, DC.

Questions concerning the NRC's LPDR Program should be addressed to Ms. Jona L. Souder, LPDR Program Manager, Freedom of Information/Local Public Document Room Branch, Office of Information Resources Management, U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555, telephone number 301-415-7170, or toll-free 1-800-638-8081.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 18th day of June, 1997.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Russell A. Powell,

Chief, Freedom of Information/Local Public Document Room Branch, Office of Information Resources Management.

[FR Doc. 97-16486 Filed 6-23-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7590-01-P

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[Docket Nos. 50-255, 50-266, 50-301, 50-313, 50-368, 72-5, 72-7, 72-13, and 72-1007]

Consumers Power Company (Palisades Nuclear Plant), Wisconsin Electric Power Company (Point Beach Nuclear Plant, Units 1 and 2), Entergy Operations, Inc. (Arkansas Nuclear One, Units 1, and 2); Issuance of Director's Decision Under 10 CFR 2.206

Notice is hereby given that the Director, Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards, has issued a Director's Decision concerning a Petition dated October 18, 1996, filed by Don't Waste Michigan and the Lake Michigan Federation (Petitioners) under Section 2.206 of Title 10 of the Code of Federal Regulations (10 CFR 2.206). The Petition requested that the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission order all users of Ventilated Storage Casks (VSC-24) systems to refrain from loading any casks until the certificate of compliance (COC), safety analysis report (SAR), and safety evaluation report (SER) are

amended to include operating controls and limits to prevent hazardous conditions. Such conditions include the generation of explosive gases, caused by the interaction between the VSC materials and the environments, encountered during loading, storage, and unloading.

Further, Petitioners claim the VSC-24 should not be used until: (i) An independent third-party review team has examined the safety issues they raise; (ii) the potential impacts of all material aspects of the casks have been fully assessed; (iii) there is experimental verification of temperature calculations and heat transfer assessments and other design assumptions; (iv) the safety of the material coatings on components and structures has been justified; and (v) the SAR, SER, and COC are amended to include the necessary operating control and limits to direct safe use of the VSC-24.

The Director of the Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards has determined that the Petition should be denied for the reasons stated in the "Director's Decision Under 10 CFR 2.206" (DD-97-15), the complete text of which follows this notice. The decision and documents cited in the decision are available for public inspection and copying in the Commission's Public Document Room, the Gelman Building, 2120 L Street, NW., Washington, DC.

A copy of this decision has been filed with the Secretary of the Commission for the Commission's review in accordance with 10 CFR 2.206(c). As provided therein, this decision will become the final action of the Commission 25 days after issuance unless the Commission, on its own motion, institutes review of the decision within that time.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 18th day of June, 1997.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Malcolm R. Knapp,

Acting Director, Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards.

Director's Decision Under 10 CFR 2.206

[DD-97-15]

I. Introduction

On October 18, 1996, Don't Waste Michigan and the Lake Michigan Federation (Petitioners) filed a Petition pursuant to Section 2.206 of Title 10 of the Code of Federal Regulations (10 CFR 2.206) requesting that the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission take the following action:

Prohibit loading of Ventilated Storage Casks (VSC-24s) until the certificate of compliance (COC), the Safety analysis report

(SAR), and the safety evaluation report (SER) are amended following an independent, third-party review of the VSC-24 design, to address concerns raised by the Petitioners' engineering consultant, Dr. Rudolf Hausler.

The Petition has been referred to me pursuant to 10 CFR 2.206. By letter dated December 10, 1996, to Dr. Mary Sinclair and Ms. Eleanor Roemer, on behalf of the Petitioners, NRC acknowledged receipt of the Petition and provided the NRC staff's determination that the Petition did not require immediate action by the NRC. Notice of receipt was published in the **Federal Register** on January 13, 1997 (62 FR 1783).

On the basis of the NRC staff's evaluation of the issues and for the reasons given below, I have determined that the Petitioners' request should be denied.

II. Background

On May 28, 1996, a hydrogen gas ignition occurred during the welding of the shield lid after spent fuel had been loaded into a VSC-24 at the Point Beach Nuclear Plant. The hydrogen was formed by a chemical reaction between a zinc-based coating (Carbo Zinc 11) and the borated water in the spent fuel pool. On June 3, 1996, the NRC issued confirmatory action letters (CALs) to those licensees using or planning to use VSC-24s for dry storage of spent nuclear fuel, i.e., licensees for Point Beach Nuclear Plant, Palisades Nuclear Generating Plant, and Arkansas Nuclear One (ANO). The CAL issued to the licensee for ANO was supplemented on June 21, 1996, and the CALs issued to the licensees for Point Beach and Palisades were supplemented on June 27, 1996. The CALs, as supplemented, documented the licensees' commitments not to load or unload a VSC-24 without resolution of material compatibility issues identified in a forthcoming general communication and subsequent NRC confirmation of corrective actions taken by the licensees. The generic communication was issued on July 5, 1996, in the form of NRC Bulletin 96-04, "Chemical, Galvanic, or Other Reactions in Spent Fuel Storage and Transportation Casks." NRC Bulletin 96-04 notified addressees about the potential for adverse chemical, galvanic, or other reactions among the materials of a spent fuel storage or transportation cask, its contents, and the environments the cask may encounter during use. The actions requested in Bulletin 96-04 included reviewing the cask materials for potential adverse reactions, evaluating the short-term and long-term effects of any identified reactions, and

determining the adequacy of cask operating procedures to minimize the consequences of any identified reactions. The NRC staff has acknowledged that the event demonstrated that the cask vendor's (Sierra Nuclear Corporation) SAR for the VSC-24 and related NRC review, as documented in the NRC staff's SER, did not adequately address the use of a zinc-based coating and its reaction with the acidic water in spent fuel pools.

In response to Bulletin 96-04 and to subsequent NRC staff inquiries, the licensees for ANO, Point Beach, and Palisades submitted to the NRC evaluations of possible material interactions and the effects of such interactions on cask performance and operation. The licensees also submitted information on the operating controls and limits that were implemented to prevent hazardous conditions which may result from adverse material interactions. The operating controls and limits included controls for the environments that the casks encounter during use, requirements for inspections and environmental sampling, and additional precautions for various cask operations.

The NRC staff evaluated the responses submitted by the licensee for ANO. As documented in the staff's safety evaluation dated December 3, 1996, the staff determined that the licensee's submittals provided the necessary level of confidence that the VSC-24 can be used to safely store spent fuel over the 20-year period of the certificate. The staff also determined that the operating controls and limits proposed by the licensee are acceptable and satisfy regulatory requirements. By a separate letter, also dated December 3, 1996, the staff informed the licensee for ANC that its corrective actions had been verified by inspections performed by the NRC staff. Shortly thereafter, the licensee initiated cask loading activities.

The NRC staff also evaluated the responses submitted by the licensees for Point Beach and Palisades. As documented in the staff's safety evaluations dated respectively April 8, 1997, and June 12, 1997, the staff determined that the licensees' evaluations and proposed operating controls and limits are acceptable and satisfy regulatory requirements. However, the CALs placed on Point Beach and Palisades still remain in place until an NRC inspection is performed to verify that the licensees' corrective actions are properly implemented.

III. Discussion

The Petition requests an NRC order to users of VSC-24s not to load additional casks until: (1) The COC, SAR, and SER are amended to contain operating controls and limits to prevent hazardous conditions; (2) an independent third-party review team has examined the safety issues raised by the Petitioners; (3) the potential impacts of all material aspects of the casks have been fully assessed; (4) there is experimental verification of temperature calculations and heat transfer assessments and other design assumptions; and (5) the safety of the material coatings on components and structures has been justified.

Item 1: Prohibit Loading of VSC-24s Pending Amendment of Documents

As noted in the NRC letter to the Petitioners on December 10, 1996, the Petitioners' request to amend the COC, SAR, and SER is similar to a request made by the Citizen's Utility Board (CUB) in a Petition dated September 30, 1996. The NRC staff denied the CUB petition on April 17, 1997, for the reasons that are identical to the reasons stated here in denying the first part of the Petitioners' request.

The circumstances set forth above made clear that, following the event at Point Beach, the NRC staff recognized that additional evaluation of potential material interactions was warranted for all spent fuel transportation and storage casks. In regard to the VSC-24, the event and subsequent NRC inspections made it apparent that actual changes in the operating procedures or the design of the cask would be necessary. CALs were issued to confirm licensees' commitments to refrain from loading VSC-24s pending completion of the NRC staff's review of the responses to Bulletin 96-04 and verification of the associated corrective actions. As discussed, the CALs established a process by which the NRC staff could obtain confidence that operating controls and limits to address potential hazardous conditions are developed and implemented by each licensee using VSC-24s.

In particular, the CAL process ensures that licensees will incorporate the necessary operating controls and limits into revised plant procedures. Moreover, under existing NRC requirements, the licensee must adequately implement those revised procedures. For this reason, no changes to the COC or SAR are needed to ensure that enforceable operating controls and limits are in place to address potential hazardous conditions during the loading or unloading of a cask. Further, as

previously indicated, the NRC staff has documented the process, information, and results of its review of the licensees' responses to Bulletin 96-04 for use of the VSC-24 at ANO, Point Beach, and Palisades in safety evaluations available for public review.

Although the actions taken as part of the CAL process provide adequate assurance that technical and regulatory compliance issues raised by the event at Point Beach will be resolved before a licensee loads or unloads a VSC-24, the NRC staff agrees with the Petitioners that it would be beneficial if the SAR and other licensing basis documents accurately describe the identified chemical reaction and the associated operating controls and limits. The NRC staff is currently reviewing a proposed amendment to the SAR and COC for the VSC-24 design and will ensure that the information related to the identified chemical reaction and associated operating controls is adequately addressed in the appropriate licensing-basis documents. In addition, the NRC staff is processing a petition for rulemaking, PRM-72-3, that may lead to additional updating of independent spent fuel storage installation SARs and the inclusion of information on operating controls and limits implemented as a result of the event at Point Beach. However, the previously discussed controls to be implemented by the licensees and verified by the staff as part of the CAL process, and the enforceability of those controls under existing NRC requirements, make it unnecessary to require revision of the specific licensing documents cited by the Petitioners as a precondition for resuming cask operations at the facilities using VSC-24s. Therefore, there would be no regulatory basis for granting the first part of the Petition to require amendment of the COC, SAR, or SER before further loading of VSC-24s.

Item 2: Prohibit Loading of VSC-24s Pending Independent, Third-Party Review

Petitioners request the NRC to prohibit loading of VSC-24s until the COC, SAR and SER are amended following an independent, third-party review to address concerns raised by the Petitioners. The NRC staff performed a review of the VSC-24 design prior to certification in 1993. As a result of the review, the staff determined that the design and operation of the cask system is in compliance with 10 CFR Part 72. The staff also concluded, with a high degree of assurance, that the VSC-24 will safely store spent fuel over the 20-year period of the certificate. Notwithstanding the staff's review and

determination in 1993, the Petitioners are claiming that a new, independent review is needed before further VSC-24s are loaded.

While the event at Point Beach revealed the need for additional evaluation by licensees and NRC of potential material interactions in the VSC-24 (and other transportation and storage casks), the actions already taken, in the staff's judgment, provide an adequate response. In particular, Bulletin 96-04 was issued to request additional information from licensees using the VSC-24 on material interactions and compatibility in the VSC-24 and on the corrective actions implemented. The NRC staff then received and reviewed the responses submitted by the licensees for ANO, Point Beach, and Palisades. The staff's reviews (as well as the licensees') have been exhaustive and were performed by an inter-disciplinary team of engineers knowledgeable in materials, corrosion, metallurgy, chemistry, structural engineering, heat transfer, nuclear engineering, and other technical fields needed to perform the review. The results of the staff's reviews, including the necessary corrective actions, are documented and justified in the staff's December 3, 1996, April 8, 1997, and June 12, 1997, safety evaluations. These corrective actions include: cleanliness checks before placing the cask in the spent fuel pool, venting and monitoring of the air space beneath the VSC-24 shield lid during welding or cutting activities, discontinuing welding or cutting should the hydrogen concentration exceed 0.4% by volume (10% of the minimum amount necessary for a combustible concentration), and sampling the boron concentration in the spent fuel pool and multi-assembly sealed basket (MSB) water. While the staff agreed that the corrective actions were necessary to prevent hazardous conditions during the loading and unloading of VSC-24s, the information submitted by the Petitioners does not raise any new issues or provide any reason for the staff to question its conclusion that the VSC-24 will safely store spent fuel over the 20-year period of the certificate.

In reaching this conclusion, the NRC staff evaluated the specific concerns raised by the Petitioners related to the design of the VSC-24. The staff believes that these concerns have already been addressed by the recent evaluations submitted in response to Bulletin 96-04, by information submitted to NRC to support the certification of the VSC-24 design in 1993, or by other information submitted in support of NRC review and inspection activities. Each of the

Petitioners's specific concerns is addressed below.

(i) The Petitioners claim that the cask design allows for fuel elements to be in contact with the zinc primer creating a galvanic couple which will accelerate the corrosion of the zinc. The NRC staff considered galvanic effects between the Zircaloy fuel rods and the Carbo Zinc 11 coating. The staff agrees that a galvanic effect would increase the corrosion rate of the zinc, with a corresponding increase in the hydrogen gas generation rate, as the zinc in the Carbo Zinc 11 coating is polarized to a more active potential. However, in the VSC-24 design, several factors reduce the amount of zinc polarization such that there would not be a significant increase in hydrogen generation. One factor is the contact resistances between the stainless steel fuel assembly end-fittings and the Zircaloy fuel rods and between the end-fittings and the Carbo Zinc 11 paint. Another factor is the geometry of the VSC-24 and the fuel assemblies. The fuel assemblies are placed in fuel storage sleeves with a clearance of approximately 0.1 inch to 0.5 inch between the sides of the fuel assembly and the sleeves. This clearance and the physical design of the fuel assemblies create shielding between the fuel rod surfaces and the Carbo Zinc 11 coating. This shielding effectively reduces the galvanic action between the Zircaloy fuel rods and the Carbo Zinc 11 coating. The Zircaloy fuel rods could contact the Carbo Zinc coated sleeves if the fuel assembly is not centered in the storage sleeves or if the fuel rods are bowed. However, the shielding effect and small Carbo Zinc/Zircaloy contact area would still prevent significant galvanic action. Hydrogen concentration measurements made at Point Beach and the hydrogen monitoring performed at ANO during loading of a VSC-24 in December 1996 (NRC Inspection Report Nos. 50-313/96-25 and 72-13/96-02) support the conclusion that significant galvanic action between the Zircaloy and zinc coating, and hence, increased hydrogen generation, is not occurring in the VSC-24. In addition, even if there was an increase in hydrogen generation because of the galvanic action, the staff has determined that the controls implemented by the licensees for ANO and Point Beach would prevent accumulation of a combustible concentration of hydrogen and its ignition. The staff will also review and verify the adequacy of the controls implemented by the licensee for Palisades.

(ii) The Petitioners claim that there were numerous discrepancies in the responses to Bulletin 96-04. As noted,

the NRC staff completed its review of responses for ANO, Point Beach, and Palisades. The staff found these responses to be acceptable and found no discrepancies of concern. There were minor differences in the operating controls implemented at the three facilities. However, the staff reviewed these controls and concluded that all three sets of controls are adequate to preclude hazardous conditions during cask operation.

(iii) The Petitioners claim that the epoxy-coating applied to the exterior of the Multi-Assembly Sealed Basket (MSB) could not withstand the temperatures developed during long-term storage. Technical data on the type of epoxy coating used on the MSB were provided by the licensees in their responses to Bulletin 96-04. The data show that the epoxy is temperature-resistant up to 350°F. The SAR for the VSC-24 (which the staff reviewed and accepted prior to certification in 1993) shows that under normal or off-normal storage conditions, the temperature of the MSB exterior will not exceed 300°F. for the maximum allowable heat load of 24 kW and, therefore, will not degrade the epoxy.

(iv) The Petitioners claim that the low-temperature specification in the COC for moving the VSC-24 MSB was not properly translated to the MSB shell material compositions. Low-temperature embrittlement of the MSB shell material was evaluated by the NRC staff during its safety review before certification of the VSC-24. The composition of the MSB shell material (SA516, Grade 70 carbon steel) is specified in the American Society for Mechanical Engineers, Boiler & Pressure Vessel Code, Section II, SA-516, "Specification for Pressure Vessel Plates, Carbon Steel, for Moderate- and Lower-Temperature Service." The impact testing requirements for the MSB material are found in American Society for Testing and Materials Specification A370 (ASTM A370). "Methods and Definitions for Mechanical Testing of Steel Products." As specified in the COC, SER, and SAR, each MSB shell material must be shown, during fabrication, by Charpy test per ASTM A370, to have 15 ft-lbs of absorbed energy at -50 °F. Further, movement of the MSB must occur only at ambient temperatures of 0 °F or above to avoid potential brittle fracture of the MSB material.¹ The NRC staff considers the

¹ At Palisades, the licensee has administratively set a minimum ambient temperature of 10 °F for moving the first four MSBs (CMSB-01 through -04) to be loaded because the shell material for these MSBs does not have 15 ft-lbs of absorbed energy at

50 °F temperature difference to provide sufficient margin because it places the MSB material at a temperature that is significantly above the temperature where brittle fracture could occur. It should also be noted that the temperature of the MSB shell itself would actually be substantially higher than the ambient temperature (e.g., 20 °F for 25-year-old fuel), thus providing an even higher margin. In addition, it is highly unlikely that any MSB movement activity would take place at temperature below 0 °F.

(v) The Petitioners claim that zinc-steel interaction at 800 °F to 1000 °F and possible steel embrittlement over a 20-year period were not considered. Zinc-steel interaction at the 800 °F to 1000 °F temperature range was not considered and is not a concern because, as documented in the VSC-24 SAR, temperatures in the MSB will not reach 800 °F during storage. Maximum temperatures would be 688 °F under normal conditions and 708 °F under off-normal conditions, for the maximum allowable heat load of 24 kW. Furthermore, over the storage period, the temperatures within the MSB will continue to decrease as the heat load decreases due to the decay of the spent fuel.

(vi) The Petitioners claim that the effect of molten zinc on Zircaloy has not been verified experimentally. The NRC staff evaluated the durability and behavior of the zinc coating under the range of storage temperatures. The presence of molten zinc is not expected under the storage temperatures and conditions, thus the effect of molten zinc on Zircaloy is not a concern. However, as documented in the staff's safety evaluations for ANO (dated December 3, 1996), Point Beach (dated April 8, 1997), and Palisades (dated June 12, 1997), the staff did evaluate the potential interaction between zinc vapor and Zircaloy and the effect of this interaction. Based on the information provided in the responses to Bulletin 96-04, the staff concluded that the potential interaction between zinc vapor and Zircaloy presented no immediate or long-term safety concern for the spent fuel stored in the VSC-24.

(vii) The Petitioners claim that the vacuum-drying process does not seem to have been experimentally verified. Vacuum drying is a well-established,

widely used method for removing moisture from spent fuel storage and transportation casks. The process used for the VSC-24 is a common process, which the NRC staff evaluated and determined to be acceptable during the safety review before certification in 1993. In the staff's judgment, experimental testing to verify a well-established process is unnecessary.

(viii) The Petitioners claim that the thermal analyses for the VSC-24 have not been experimentally verified. The thermal analyses for the VSC-24 contained conservative key assumptions, including a total heat generation of 1 kW per assembly (a total of 24 kW per cask). This assumption is conservative because it is highly unlikely that each assembly loaded in the cask will generate 1 kW of heat. In addition, the assembly and total cask heat loads will continually decrease over time as the spent fuel decays. In light of the conservatisms in the thermal analyses, the staff does not see the need for requiring experimental verification of the VSC-24 thermal analyses. Nevertheless, the COC requires that a thermal test be performed on the first VSC-24 to be loaded. The purpose of the test is to measure the heat removal performance of the VSC-24 system. The licensee for Palisades performed such a test and summarized its results in a letter to NRC dated June 10, 1993. The temperatures measured during the test were lower than the predicted temperatures. The results thus indicate that the VSC-24 performs its intended heat removal function. The thermal test at Palisades was performed with a 12 kW heat load. To date, no VSC-24s have been loaded with greater than 12 kW heat load. As required by the COC, the thermal test must be performed for the first cask to use any higher heat loads, up to 24 kW.

The NRC staff believes, based on the foregoing, that an independent, third-party review is not warranted by the Petitioners' specific concerns. However, NRC review activities relating to the VSC-24 will nonetheless continue. In particular, NRC inspection activities at the facilities operated by the licensees, the VSC-24 vendor, and the VSC-24 fabricators may lead to additional reviews of the VSC-24. In addition, the staff is currently reviewing a proposed amendment, submitted by the VSC-24 vendor, to the SAR and COC for the VSC-24 design. This review will be performed in accordance with the staff's "Standard Review Plan for Dry Cask Storage Systems" (NUREG-1536) to ensure the thoroughness, quality, and consistency of the review. Where relevant, recent operational, technical,

and safety issues related to the VSC-24 design will be considered by the staff in this review.²

In addition, it is my judgment that the NRC staff is fully capable of fulfilling the responsibility for reviewing, approving, and certifying dry cask storage systems to be used under 10 CFR Part 72 which, by law, belongs to the NRC. In conducting its review, the NRC staff must have reasonable assurance that the cask system will safely store spent fuel over the period of the certificate. Further, the staff will assign the necessary resources and expertise to perform such reviews. When the NRC staff lacks either the resources or expertise to perform all or portions of the review in-house, the NRC may, and does, supplement its own ranks by using outside specialists.

Item 3: Prohibit Loading of VSC-24s Pending Assessment of Cask Materials

Petitioners request the NRC to prohibit loading of VSC-24s until the potential impacts of all material aspects of the casks have been fully assessed. As previously stated, Bulletin 96-04 was issued to request information on material interactions and compatibility in spent fuel storage and transportation casks. In response to this request, the licensees for ANO, Point Beach, and Palisades submitted evaluations on possible material interactions in the VSC-24 and the effects of such interactions on cask performance and operation. The only significant material interaction identified was between the zinc-based coating and the borated spent fuel pool water. As previously discussed, the operating controls and limits put in place by the licensees provide an adequate level of confidence to prevent the adverse effects of this interaction (generation and possible ignition of hydrogen gas and possible depletion of boron in the water). The staff reviewed these evaluations and, based on the information provided, concluded that none of the identified material interactions would adversely affect the VSC-24's ability to safely store spent fuel over the 20-year period of the certificate. The results of the staff's reviews are documented in the staff's December 3, 1996, April 8, 1997, and June 12, 1997, safety evaluations for ANO, Point Beach, and Palisades, respectively.

² Recent concerns relating to the MSB closure welds, as documented in NRC Inspection Report No. 72-1007/97-204, dated April 15, 1997, may result in further evaluations of the VSC-24 design and, if necessary, appropriate regulatory action to ensure continued safe use of the VSC-24.

— 50 °F. Rather, these MSBs have 15 ft-lbs of absorbed energy at -40 °F. Thus, to retain the 50 °F temperature margin, the licensee has restricted movement of these four MSBs to an ambient temperature of 10 °F or above. The NRC staff has reviewed and approved the licensee's administrative limit, as documented in NRC safety evaluation dated September 26, 1995.

Item 4: Prohibit Loading of VSC-24s Pending Experimental Verification of Thermal and Other Design Assumptions

Petitioners request the NRC to prohibit loading of VSC-24s until there is experimental verification of temperature calculations and heat transfer assessments and other design assumptions. The thermal and other engineering and design analyses for the VSC-24 contained conservative key assumptions which are discussed in the SAR and SER. In addition, the acceptance criteria for these analyses have margins of safety that the staff considers to be sufficient. In light of the conservatisms and safety margins in the thermal and other analyses, the staff does not see the need for requiring experimental verification of the thermal and other design assumptions used in evaluating the VSC-24.

Item 5: Prohibit Loading of VSC-24s Pending Assessment of Material Coatings

Petitioners request the NRC to prohibit loading of VSC-24s until the safety of the material coatings on components and structures has been justified. As discussed above, material interactions within the VSC-24 and their effect on cask operations and performance were evaluated by the licensees in response to Bulletin 96-04 and reviewed by the staff. Specifically, the licensees evaluated, and the staff reviewed, the use of the zinc-based coating, its reaction with borated water and other cask environments, and the effect of the reaction or reaction products on cask operations and on the performance of the various cask components and structures. The staff concluded that use of existing VSC-24s with the zinc-based coating is acceptable in light of the operating controls and limits for preventing hazardous conditions that must be properly implemented by licensees during cask loading and unloading. Based on the information provided, the staff also concluded that neither the coating itself, nor its reaction with borated water or other cask environments, would have an adverse effect on the performance of the cask components or structures during the period of spent fuel storage.

IV. Conclusion

The Petitioners requested that the NRC prohibit loading of VSC-24s until the COC, SAR, and SER are amended to contain operating controls and limits to prevent hazardous conditions. After reviewing each of the Petitioners' claims, I conclude that, for the reasons

discussed above, no adequate basis exists for granting the Petitioners' request to prohibit licensees' use of the VSC-24 for dry cask storage of spent nuclear fuel at Palisades, Point Beach, or ANO pending: (1) Revision of the SAR, SER, and COC for the VSC-24 to contain operating controls and limits to prevent hazardous conditions; (2) an independent third-party review to examine the safety issues raised by the Petitioners; and (3) experimental verification of temperature calculations and heat transfer assessments and other design assumptions. Furthermore, I conclude that the Petitioners' other two requests, an assessment of potential impacts of VSC-24 material aspects and a safety justification of material coatings on components and structures, have already been fulfilled through the staff's review of the licensees' responses to Bulletin 96-04.

A copy of this decision will be filed with the Secretary of the Commission for the Commission to review in accordance with 10 CFR 2.206(c).

As provided by this regulation, this decision will constitute the final action of the Commission 25 days after issuance, unless the Commission, on its own motion, institutes a review of the decision within that time.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 18th day of June, 1997.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Malcolm R. Knapp,

Acting Director, Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards.

[FR Doc. 97-16484 Filed 6-23-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7590-01-M

POSTAL RATE COMMISSION

Sunshine Act Meeting

NAME OF AGENCY: Postal Rate Commission.

TIME AND DATE: 10:30 a.m., Thursday, July 10, 1997.

PLACE: Conference Room, 1333 H Street, NW., Suite 300, Washington, DC 20268.

STATUS: Open.

MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED: To discuss and vote on the Postal Rate Commission Budget for FY 1998 and election of a Vice Chairman.

CONTACT PERSON FOR MORE INFORMATION: Margaret P. Crenshaw, Secretary, Postal Rate Commission, Suite 300, 1333 H Street, NW., Washington, DC 20268-0001, Telephone (202) 789-6840.

Margaret P. Crenshaw,
Secretary.

[FR Doc. 97-16579 Filed 6-19-97; 4:29 pm]

BILLING CODE 7710-FW-P

SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

[File No. 1-9933]

Issuer Delisting; Notice of Application To Withdraw From Listing and Registration; (Amerac Energy Corporation, Common Stock, \$0.05 Par Value)

June 18, 1997.

Amerac Energy Corporation ("Company") has filed an application with the Securities and Exchange Commission ("Commission"), pursuant to Section 12(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 ("Act") and Rule 12d2-2(d) promulgated thereunder, to withdraw the above specified security ("Security") from listing and registration on the Boston Stock Exchange, Inc. ("BSE").

The reasons cited in the application for withdrawing the Security from listing and registration include the following:

According to the Company, the Security is also listed on the American Stock Exchange, Inc. ("Amex") effective March 18, 1997 and an application on Form 8-A for registration of the Security on the Amex was declared effective by the Commission on March 5, 1997. The Company cannot justify the expense of being listed on two exchanges and thereby, wishes to withdraw from the BSE.

Any interested person may, on or before July 10, 1997, submit by letter to the Secretary of the Securities and Exchange Commission, 450 Fifth Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20549, facts bearing upon whether the application has been made in accordance with the rules of the exchanges and what terms, if any, should be imposed by the Commission for the protection of investors. The Commission, based on the information submitted to it, will issue an order granting the application after the date mentioned above, unless the Commission determines to order a hearing on the matter.

For the Commission, by the Division of Market Regulation, pursuant to delegated authority.

Jonathan G. Katz,
Secretary.

[FR Doc. 97-16536 Filed 6-23-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 8010-01-M