

Environmental Assessment*Identification of Proposed Action*

The proposed action would exempt the licensee from the requirements of 10 CFR 70.24(a), which requires in each area in which special nuclear material is handled, used, or stored a monitoring system that will energize clear audible alarms if accidental criticality occurs. The proposed action would also exempt the licensee from the requirements to maintain emergency procedures for each area in which this licensed special nuclear material is handled, used, or stored to ensure that all personnel withdraw to an area of safety upon the sounding of the alarm, to familiarize personnel with the evacuation plan, and to designate responsible individuals for determining the cause of the alarm, and to place radiation survey instruments in accessible locations for use in such an emergency.

The proposed action is in accordance with the licensee's application for exemption dated April 23, 1997, as supplemented by letter dated August 27, 1997.

The Need for the Proposed Action

The purpose of 10 CFR 70.24 is to ensure that, if a criticality were to occur during the handling of special nuclear material, personnel would be alerted to that fact and would take appropriate action. At a commercial nuclear power plant, the inadvertent criticality with which 10 CFR 70.24 is concerned could occur during fuel handling operations. The special nuclear material that could be assembled into a critical mass at a commercial nuclear power plant is in the form of nuclear fuel; the quantity of other forms of special nuclear material that is stored on site is small enough to preclude achieving a critical mass. Because the fuel is not enriched beyond 5.0 weight percent Uranium-235 and because commercial nuclear plant licensees have procedures and design features that prevent inadvertent criticality, the staff has determined that it is unlikely that an inadvertent criticality could occur due to the handling of special nuclear material at a commercial power reactor. The requirements of 10 CFR 70.24(a), therefore, are not necessary to ensure the safety of personnel during the handling of special nuclear materials at commercial power reactors. However, an exemption to 10 CFR 70.24(a) is needed to permit a deviation from these requirements.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action

The Commission has completed its evaluation of the proposed action and concludes that the proposed action involves features located entirely within the protected area as defined in 10 CFR Part 20.

The proposed action will not result in an increase in the probability or consequences of accidents or result in a change in occupational or offsite dose. Therefore, there are no radiological impacts associated with the proposed action.

The proposed action will not result in a change in nonradiological plant effluents and will have no other nonradiological environmental impact.

Accordingly, the Commission concludes that there are no environmental impacts associated with this action.

Alternatives to the Proposed Action

Since the Commission has concluded that 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 exemption, the staff considered denial of the requested exemption. Denial of the request 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 Related to the Operation of H.B. Robinson Nuclear Steam Electric Plant, Unit 2," dated April 1975.

Agencies and Persons Consulted

In accordance with its stated policy, on February 10, 1998, the staff consulted with the South Carolina State official, Virgil Autry, South Carolina Department of Health, Bureau of Radiological Health and Environmental Control. 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

letters dated April 23 and August 27, 1997, which are available for public inspection at the Commission's Public Document Room, which is located at The Gelman Building, 2120 L Street, NW., Washington, DC, and at the local public document room located at the Hartsville Memorial Library, 147 West College Avenue, Hartsville, South Carolina 29550.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 2nd day of February 1998.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Joseph W. Shea,

Project Manager, Project Directorate II-1, Division of Reactor Projects—I/II, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation.

[FR Doc. 98-6084 Filed 3-9-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7590-01-P

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION**Sunshine Act Meeting**

AGENCY HOLDING THE MEETING: Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

DATES: Weeks of March 9, 16, 23, and 30, 1998.

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

STATUS: Public and Closed.

MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED:

Week of March 9

There are no meetings the week of March 9.

Week of March 16—Tentative

Thursday, March 19

2:30 p.m.—Affirmation Session (PUBLIC MEETING), (if needed).

Week of March 23—Tentative

Monday, March 23

2:30 p.m.—Briefing on MOX Fuel Fabrication Facility Licensing, (PUBLIC MEETING), (Contact: Ted Sherr, 301-415-7218).

Thursday, March 26

11:00 a.m.—Briefing by Executive Branch (Closed—Ex. 1).

2:00 p.m.—Briefing on Recent Research Program Results, (PUBLIC MEETING).

3:30 p.m.—Affirmation Session (PUBLIC MEETING), (if needed).

Week of March 30—Tentative

Monday, March 30

2:00 p.m.—Briefing by Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board (NWTRB), (PUBLIC MEETING).

Tuesday, March 31

- 10:00 a.m.—Briefing on Fire Protection (PUBLIC MEETING), (Contact: Tad Marsh, 301-415-2873).
- 3:00 p.m.—Briefing by Organization of Agreement States and Status of IMPEP Program (PUBLIC MEETING), (Contact: Richard Bangart, 301-415-3340).

Thursday, April 2

- 1:30 p.m.—Meeting with Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards, (ACRS) (PUBLIC MEETING), (Contact: John Larkins, 301-415-7360).
- 3:00 p.m.—Briefing on Improvements to the Senior Management Meeting, Process (PUBLIC MEETING), (Contact: Bill Borchard, 301-415-1257).

Friday, April 3

- 10:30 a.m.—Affirmation Session (PUBLIC MEETING)
- *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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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, D.C. 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.

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William M. Hill, Jr.,

SECY Tracking Officer, Office of the Secretary.

[FR Doc. 98-6292 Filed 3-6-98; 2:15 pm]

BILLING CODE 7540-01-M

OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

The National Partnership Council; Notice of Meeting

AGENCY: Office of Personnel Management.

TIME AND DATE: 9:45 a.m., March 20, 1998.

PLACE: Sheraton Premiere Hotel at Tyson's Corner, 8661 Leesburg Pike, Vienna, Virginia 22182.

STATUS: This meeting will be open to the public. Seating will be available on a first-come, first-served basis. Individuals with special access needs wishing to attend should contact OPM at the number shown below to obtain appropriate accommodations.

MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED: The National Partnership Council (NPC) will receive reports on partnership activities, including middle managers' involvement.

CONTACT PERSON FOR MORE INFORMATION: Rose M. Gwin, Director, Center for Partnership and Labor-Management Relations, Office of Personnel Management, Theodore Roosevelt Building, 1900 E Street, NW., Room 7H28, Washington, DC 20415-0001, (202) 606-2930.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: We invite interested persons and organizations to submit written comments. Mail or deliver your comments to Rose M. Gwin at the address shown above.

Office of Personnel Management.

Janice R. Lachance,

Director.

[FR Doc. 98-6004 Filed 3-9-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6325-01-P

SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

[Release No. 34-39707; File No. SR-PCX-97-48]

Self-Regulatory Organizations; Notice of Filing of Proposed Rule Change by the Pacific Exchange, Inc. Relating to Market Maker Participation in the Pacific Exchange's Automatic Execution System for Options ("Auto-Ex")

March 3, 1998.

Pursuant to Section 19(b)(1) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 ("Act")¹ and Rule 19b-4 thereunder,² notice is hereby given that on December 18, 1997,³ the Pacific Exchange, Inc. ("PCX" or "Exchange") filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission ("Commission" or "SEC") the proposed

rule change as described in Items I, II and III below, which Items have been prepared by the Exchange. The Commission is publishing this notice to solicit comments on the proposed rule change from interested persons.

I. Self-Regulatory Organization's Statement of the Terms of Substance of the Proposed Rule Change

The Exchange is proposing to amend its rules relating to Market Maker participation in the Exchange's automatic execution system for options ("Auto-Ex"). The text of proposed rule change is available for review at the Exchange's principal offices and in the Commission's Public Reference Room.

II. Self-Regulatory Organization's Statement of the Purpose of and Statutory Basis for, the Proposed Rule Change

In its filing with the Commission, the Exchange included statements concerning the purpose of and basis for the proposed rule change and discussed any comments it received on the proposed rule change. The text of these statements may be examined at the places specified in Item IV below. The Exchange has prepared summaries, set forth in Sections A, B and C below, of the most significant aspects of such statements.

A. Self-Regulatory Organization's Statement of the Purpose of, and Statutory Basis for, the Proposed Rule Change

On September 15, 1993, the Commission approved an Exchange proposal to codify its Market Maker eligibility standards for participation in the Auto-Ex feature of the Pacific Options Exchange Trading System ("POETS").⁴ Under that rule change, Market Makers are only eligible for Auto-Ex at one trading post that is within that market Maker's primary appointment zone.⁵ The rule further provides that participants who sign onto the system are required to remain on the system for the duration of the trading day, but that exemptions from this requirement may be granted by two Floor Officials under certain

⁴ See Securities Exchange Act Release No. 32908 (September 15, 1993), 58 FR 49076 (September 21, 1993) (order approving File No. SR-PSE-91-38). Previously, the Commission had approved some of these provisions when it approved the implementation of the POETS pilot program. See Securities Exchange Act Release No. 27633 (January 18, 1990) (order approving SR-PSE-89-26) ("POETS Approval Order"). See also, Securities Exchange Act Release No. 27423 (November 6, 1989), 54 FR 47434 (November 14, 1989) ("POETS" notice).

⁵ Market Maker primary appointment zone requirements are set forth in PCX Rule 6.35.

¹ 15 U.S.C. 78s(b)(1).

² 17 CFR 240.19b-4.

³ On February 27, 1998, the Pacific Exchange, Inc. submitted an amendment clarifying certain procedures and terms referred to in the proposed rule change. See letter from Michael D. Pierson, Senior Attorney, Regulatory Policy, Pacific Exchange, Inc., to Mignon McLemore, Attorney, Office of Market Supervision, Division of Market Regulation, SEC, dated February 26, 1998 ("Amendment No. 1").