

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT: Dr. Edward Y. Shum, Spent Fuel Licensing Section, Spent Fuel Project Office, Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555, telephone 301-415-8545.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 9th day of March 1998.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Charles J. Haughney,

*Acting Director, Spent Fuel Project Office,
Office of Nuclear Material Safety and
Safeguards.*

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NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[Docket No. 50-331]

IES Utilities Inc., Central Iowa Power Cooperative, Corn Belt Power Cooperative, and Duane Arnold Energy Center; Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) is considering issuance of an amendment to Facility Operating License No. DPR-49 issued to IES Utilities Inc., (the licensee), for operation of the Duane Arnold Energy Center (DAEC), located in Linn County, Iowa.

Environmental Assessment

Identification of the Proposed Action

The proposed amendment will revise the existing Technical Specifications (TS) in their entirety and incorporate the guidance provided in NUREG-1433, Revision 1, "Standard Technical Specifications, General Electric Plants BWR/4," dated April 1995. The proposed action is in accordance with the licensee's amendment request dated October 30, 1996, as supplemented by letters dated June 10, September 5, 17, 25, and 30, October 16, November 18 and 21, December 8 and 15, 1997, January 2, 5, 12, 22 and 23, and February 10 and 26, 1998.

The Need for the Proposed Action

It has been recognized that nuclear safety in all plants would benefit from improvement and standardization of TS. The "NRC Interim Policy Statement on Technical Specification Improvements for Nuclear Power Reactors," (52 FR 3788) contained proposed criteria for defining the scope of technical specifications. Later, the "NRC Final Policy Statement on TS Improvement for Nuclear Power Reactors," (58 FR 39132) incorporated lessons learned

since publication of the interim policy statement and formed the basis for recent revision to 10 CFR 50.36. The "Final Rule" (60 FR 36953) codified criteria for determining the content of technical specifications. To facilitate the development of standard TS, each vendor owners' group (OG) and the NRC staff developed standard TS. The NRC Committee to Review Generic Requirements (CRGR) reviewed the STS, made note of its safety merits, and indicated its support of conversion by operating plants to the STS. For DAEC, the Standard Technical Specifications (STS) are NUREG-1433, Revision 1, "Standard Technical Specifications, General Electric Plants BWR/4," dated April 1995. This document formed the basis for DAEC Improved TS (ITS) conversion.

Description of the Proposed Change

The proposed revision to the TS is based on NUREG-1433, and on guidance provided in the Final Policy Statement. Its objective is to completely rewrite, reformat, and streamline the existing TS. Emphasis is placed on human factors principles to improve clarity and understanding. The Bases section has been significantly expanded to clarify and better explain the purpose and foundation of each specification. In addition to NUREG-1433, portions of the existing TS were also used as the basis for the development of the DAEC ITS. Plant-specific issues (unique design features, requirements, and operating practices) were discussed at length with the licensee.

The proposed changes from the existing TS can be grouped into four general categories. These groupings are characterized as administrative changes, technical changes—relocations, technical changes—more restrictive, and technical changes—less restrictive. They are described as follows:

1. Administrative changes are those that involve restructuring, renumbering, rewording, interpretation, and rearranging of requirements and other changes not affecting technical content or substantially revising an operational requirement. The reformatting, renumbering, and rewording processes reflect the attributes of NUREG-1433 and do not involve technical changes to the existing TSs. The proposed changes include (a) providing the appropriate numbers, etc., for NUREG-1433 bracketed information (information that must be supplied on a plant-specific basis, and which may change from plant to plant), (b) identifying plant-specific wording for system names, etc., and (c) changing NUREG-1433 section wording to conform to existing licensee

practices. Such changes are administrative in nature and do not affect initiators of analyzed events or assumed mitigation of accident or transient events.

2. Technical changes—relocations are those changes involving relocation of requirements and surveillances from the existing TS to licensee-controlled documents, for structures, systems, components, or variables that do not meet the criteria for inclusion in the Improved Technical Specifications. Relocated changes are those existing TS requirements that do not satisfy or fall within any of the four criteria specified in the Commission's Final Policy Statement and 10 CFR 50.36, and may be relocated to appropriate licensee-controlled documents.

The licensee's application of the screening criteria is described in Volume 1 of its October 30, 1996, application titled, "Duane Arnold Energy Center Improved Technical Specifications Split Report and Relocated CTS Pages." The affected structures, systems, components, or variables are not assumed to be initiators of events analyzed in the Updated Final Safety Analysis Report (UFSAR) and are not assumed to mitigate accident or transient events analyzed in the UFSAR. The requirements and surveillances for these affected structures, systems, components, or variables will be relocated from the existing TS to administratively controlled documents such as the UFSAR, the BASES, or other licensee-controlled documents. Changes made to these documents will be made pursuant to 10 CFR 50.59 or other appropriate control mechanisms. In addition, the affected structures, systems, components, or variables are addressed in existing surveillance procedures which are also subject to 10 CFR 50.59.

3. Technical Changes—more restrictive are those changes that involve more stringent requirements for operation of the facility or eliminate existing flexibility. These more stringent requirements do not result in operation that will alter assumptions relative to mitigation of an accident or transient event. Also, other more restrictive technical changes have been made to achieve consistency, correct discrepancies, and remove ambiguities from the specification.

4. Technical changes—less restrictive are changes where current requirements are relaxed or eliminated, or new flexibility is provided. The more significant "less restrictive" requirements are justified on a case-by-case basis. When requirements have

been shown to provide little or no safety benefit, their removal from the ITS may be appropriate. In most cases, relaxations granted to individual plants on a plant-specific basis were the result of (a) generic NRC actions, (b) new NRC staff positions that have evolved from technological advancements and operating experience, or (c) resolution of the Owners Groups' comments on the ITS. Generic relaxations contained in NUREG-1433 were reviewed by the staff and found to be acceptable because they are consistent with current licensing practices and NRC regulations.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action

The Commission has completed its evaluation of the proposed revision to the TS. Changes which are administrative in nature have been found to have no effect on the technical content of the TS and are acceptable. The increased clarity and understanding these changes bring to the TS are expected to improve the operators' control of the plant in normal and accident conditions. Relocation of requirements to other licensee-controlled documents does not change the requirements themselves. Further changes to these requirements may be made by the licensee under 10 CFR 50.59 or other NRC approved control mechanisms, which ensures continued maintenance of adequate requirements. All such relocations have been found to be in conformance with the guidelines of NUREG-1433 and the Final Policy Statement, and are, therefore, acceptable.

Changes involving more restrictive requirements have been found to enhance plant safety and to be acceptable.

Changes involving less restrictive requirements have been reviewed individually. When requirements have been shown to provide little or no safety benefit or to place unnecessary burden on the licensee, their removal from the TS was justified. In most cases, relaxations previously granted to individual plants on a plant-specific basis were the result of a generic action, or of agreements reached during discussions with the Owners Groups and found to be acceptable for DAEC. Generic relaxations contained in NUREG-1433 have also been reviewed by the NRC staff and have been found to be acceptable.

In summary, the proposed revisions to the TS were found to provide control of plant operations such that reasonable assurance will be provided that the health and safety of the public will be adequately protected.

These TS changes will not 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 the allowable individual or cumulative occupational radiation exposure. Therefore, the Commission concludes that there are no significant radiological environmental impacts associated with the proposed TS amendments.

With regard to potential nonradiological impacts, the proposed amendment involves features located entirely within the restricted area as defined in 10 CFR Part 20. They do not affect nonradiological plant effluents and have no other environmental impact. Therefore, the Commission concludes that there are no significant nonradiological environmental impacts associated with the proposed TS amendments.

Alternatives to the Proposed Action

Since the Commission has concluded there is no measurable environmental impact associated with the proposed amendments, any alternatives with equal or greater environmental impact need not be evaluated. The principal alternative to this action would be to deny the amendment request. Such action would not reduce the environmental impact of plant operations.

Alternative Use of Resources

This action does not involve the use of any resources not previously considered in the Final Environmental Statement for the DAEC.

Agencies and Persons Consulted

In accordance with its stated policy, on February 23, 1998, the Commission consulted with the Iowa State official, Ms. Parween Baig, 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 application dated October 30, 1996, as supplemented by letters dated June 10, September 5, 17, 25, and 30, October 16, November 18 and 21, December 8 and 15, 1997, January 2, 5, 12, 22 and 23,

and February 10 and 26, 1998, which are available for public inspection at the Commission's Public Document Room, The Gelman Building, 2120 L Street, NW., Washington, D.C. 20555, and at the local public document room located at the Cedar Rapids Public Library, 500 First Street, SE., Cedar Rapids, IA 52401.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 11th day of March 1998.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Richard J. Laufer,

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NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[Docket Nos. 50-280 and 50-281]

Virginia Electric and Power Company; Surry Power Station, Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) is considering issuance of amendments to Facility Operating Licenses Nos. DPR-32 and DPR-37, issued to Virginia Electric and Power Company, (the licensee), for operation of the Surry Power Station (SPS) located in Surry County, Virginia.

Environmental Assessment

Identification of the Proposed Action

By letter dated November 5, 1997, as supplemented by letter dated January 28, 1998, the licensee proposed to change the technical specifications (TS) to allow an increase in fuel enrichment (Uranium 235, U-235) to 4.3 weight percent. Surry TS currently limit fuel in the spent fuel pool and reactor to a maximum enrichment of 4.1 weight percent of U-235.

The Need for the Proposed Action

The licensee intends, in the future, to use the more highly enriched fuel to support longer fuel cycles. Currently, TS 5.3.A.3 and 5.4.B limit the enrichment of reload fuel for the reactor core and the spent fuel storage racks to 4.1 weight percent U-235. The amendment is needed to give the licensee the flexibility to use more highly enriched fuel to support longer fuel cycles.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action

The Commission has completed its evaluation of the proposed revision to