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

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

**Michael T. Masnik,**

*Senior Project Manager, Non-Power Reactors and Decommissioning Project Directorate, Division of Reactor Program Management, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation.*

[FR Doc. 97-15695 Filed 6-13-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7590-01-P

## NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[Docket Nos. 50-327 and 50-328]

### Tennessee Valley Authority; Sequoyah Nuclear Plant, Units 1 And 2; Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC or the Commission) is considering issuance of amendments to Facility Operating License No. DPR-77 and DPR-79, issued to the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA, the licensee), for operation of the Sequoyah Nuclear Plant, Units 1 and 2 (SQN), located in Hamilton County, Tennessee.

#### Environmental Assessment

##### Identification of the Proposed Action

The proposed amendments would revise the SQN Technical Specifications (TS) relating to storage of reactor fuel containing a higher enrichment of Uranium-235 (5.0 weight-percent (w/o) vs. 4.5 w/o) in the new fuel pit storage racks. The Commission has already authorized use of the more highly-enriched fuel in the reactor core and storage in the spent fuel pool in previous license amendments.

The proposed amendments are in accordance with TVA's application dated March 13, 1997.

##### Need for the Proposed Action

The proposed changes to the Facility Operating Licenses are needed so that the licensee can use more highly enriched fuel, and thereby provide the flexibility of extending the fuel irradiation/burnup to permit longer fuel cycles (i.e., longer continuous periods of operation). Use of the proposed more highly enriched fuels would require the

use of fewer fuel assemblies over the remaining life of the plant.

##### Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action

The Commission has completed its evaluation of the proposed revisions to the TS. The proposed revision would permit use of fuel enriched with Uranium-235 (U-235) up to 5.0 nominal w/o. The safety considerations associated with reactor operation using higher fuel enrichment and burnup rates have been evaluated by the NRC staff (the staff). Based on its review, the staff concludes that the proposed changes are acceptable and would not adversely affect plant safety. The proposed changes have no adverse effect on the probability of any accident. The increased burnup may slightly change the mix of fission products that might be released in the event of a serious accident but such small changes would not significantly affect the environmental consequences of serious accidents. No changes are being made in the types or amounts of any radiological effluents that may be released offsite during normal plant operations. There is also 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 changes to the TS involve components in the plant which are located within the restricted area as defined in 10 CFR Part 20. They do not affect nonradiological plant effluents and have no other environmental impacts. Accordingly, the Commission concludes that there are no significant nonradiological environmental impacts associated with the proposed action.

The environmental impacts of transportation resulting from the use of more highly enriched fuel and extended burnup rates have been discussed in the generic staff assessment entitled "NRC Assessment of the Environmental Effects of Transportation Resulting from Extended Fuel Enrichment and Irradiation," dated July 7, 1988, and published in the **Federal Register** (53 FR 30355). As indicated therein, the environmental cost contribution of the proposed increase in fuel enrichment and irradiation limits are either unchanged or may in fact be reduced from those summarized in Table S-4 as set forth in 10 CFR 51.52(c).

Therefore, the staff concludes that there are no significant radiological or nonradiological environmental impacts

associated with the proposed amendment. The staff finds that the action will not result in a significant increase in any adverse environmental impact previously evaluated in the SQN Final Environmental Statement (FES) dated February 13, 1974, as modified by NRC's testimony to the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board, supplements to the FES, environmental impact appraisals, or decisions of the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board.

##### 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 staff considered denial of the proposed action. Denial of the application would result in no change in current environmental impacts and would result in reduced operational flexibility. The environmental impacts of the proposed action and the alternative action are similar.

##### Alternative Use of Resources

The action would involve no use of resources not previously considered in the FES for SQN.

##### Agencies and Persons Consulted

In accordance with its stated policy, on June 10, 1997 the staff consulted with the Tennessee State official, Eddy Nanney of the Tennessee Division of Radiological Health, regarding the environmental impact of the proposed action. The State official posed the question of whether or not TVA had revisited its emergency planning procedures because of a perceived higher source term in the core. The staff has already reviewed the use of 5.0 w/o fuel enrichment and higher fuel burnup prior to issuing the Sequoyah license amendments authorizing use of 5.0 w/o enriched fuel in the reactor core. These amendments were issued on August 1, 1990, and the supporting NRC Environmental Assessment was published in the **Federal Register** on July 31, 1990 (55 FR 31112). The Environmental Assessment stated the following:

The increased burnup may slightly change the mix of fission products that might be released in the event of a serious accident but such small changes would not significantly affect the environmental consequences of serious accidents. The effect of increasing the fuel enrichment to 5.0 percent and burnups to 60,000 MWD/MTU would be to only increase the calculated thyroid dose for the postulated fuel handling accident by about 20% and would not exceed acceptable

values. There would be no effect on the estimated consequences of other postulated design basis accidents.

The action for which this current Environmental Assessment has been prepared only authorizes storage of new unirradiated fuel in the in the new fuel pit storage racks. This pit is maintained dry (not flooded) and new fuel stored therein would not be involved in any of the accident analyses that form the design basis of the plant. Therefore, it is not necessary to revisit emergency preparedness procedures because of these license amendments.

The staff reviewed the licensee's request and did not consult with agencies or persons other than the State of Tennessee.

### **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 March 13, 1997, 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 Chattanooga-Hamilton County Library, 1001 Broad Street, Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 11th day of June 1997.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

**Frederick J. Hebdon,**

*Director, Project Directorate II-3, Division of Reactor Projects—I/II, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation.*

[FR Doc. 97-15694 Filed 6-13-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7590-01-P

## **NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION**

### **Draft Regulatory Guide; Issuance, Availability**

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has issued for public comment a draft of a guide planned for its Regulatory Guide Series. This series has been developed to describe and make available to the public such information as methods acceptable to the NRC staff for implementing specific parts of the NRC's regulations, techniques used by the staff in evaluating specific problems or postulated accidents, and data

needed by the staff in its review of applications for permits and licenses.

The draft guide, temporarily identified by its task number, DG-1067, "Decommissioning of Nuclear Power Reactors," is planned for Division 1, "Power Reactors." This regulatory guide is being developed to describe methods and procedures that are acceptable to the NRC staff for implementing the requirements of the final rule on decommissioning that pertain to the initial activities and the major phases of the process of decommissioning nuclear power reactors.

The draft guide has not received complete staff review and does not represent an official NRC staff position.

Public comments are being solicited on the guide. Comments should be accompanied by supporting data. Written comments may be submitted to the Rules Review and Directives 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, 2120 L Street NW., Washington, DC. Comments will be most helpful if received by August 18, 1997.

Although a time limit is given for comments on this draft guide, comments and suggestions in connection with items for inclusion in guides currently being developed or improvements in all published guides are encouraged at any time.

Comments may be submitted electronically, in either ASCII text or Wordperfect format (version 5.1 or later), by calling the NRC Electronic Bulletin Board on FedWorld. The bulletin board may be accessed using a personal computer, a modem, and one of the commonly available communications software packages, or directly via Internet.

If using a personal computer and modem, the NRC subsystem on FedWorld can be accessed directly by dialing the toll free number: 1-800-303-9672. Communication software parameters should be set as follows: parity to none, data bits to 8, and stop bits to 1 (N,8,1). Using ANSI or VT-100 terminal emulation, the NRC NUREGs and RegGuides for Comment subsystem can then be accessed by selecting the "Rules Menu" option from the "NRC Main Menu." For further information about options available for NRC at FedWorld, consult the "Help/Information Center" from the "NRC Main Menu." Users will find the "FedWorld Online User's Guides" particularly helpful. Many NRC subsystems and data bases also have a

"Help/Information Center" option that is tailored to the particular subsystem.

The NRC subsystem on FedWorld can also be accessed by a direct dial phone number for the main FedWorld BBS, 703-321-3339, or by using Telnet via Internet, fedworld.gov. If using 703-321-3339 to contact FedWorld, the NRC subsystem will be accessed from the main FedWorld menu by selecting the "Regulatory, Government Administration and State Systems," then selecting "Regulatory Information Mall." At that point, a menu will be displayed that has an option "U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission" that will take you to the NRC Online main menu. The NRC Online area also can be accessed directly by typing "/go nrc" at a FedWorld command line. If you access NRC from FedWorld's main menu, you may return to FedWorld by selecting the "Return to FedWorld" option from the NRC Online Main Menu. However, if you access NRC at FedWorld by using NRC's toll-free number, you will have full access to all NRC systems but you will not have access to the main FedWorld system.

If you contact FedWorld using Telnet, you will see the NRC area and menus, including the Rules menu. Although you will be able to download documents and leave messages, you will not be able to write comments or upload files (comments). If you contact FedWorld using FTP, all files can be accessed and downloaded but uploads are not allowed; all you will see is a list of files without descriptions (normal Gopher look). An index file listing all files within a subdirectory, with descriptions, is included. There is a 15-minute time limit for FTP access.

Although FedWorld can be accessed through the World Wide Web, like FTP that mode only provides access for downloading files and does not display the NRC Rules menu.

For more information on NRC bulletin boards call Mr. Arthur Davis, Systems Integration and Development Branch, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555, telephone (301)415-5780; e-mail AXD3@nrc.gov. For more information on this draft regulatory guide, contact M.T. Masnik at the NRC, telephone (301)415-1191; e-mail mtm2@nrc.gov.

Regulatory guides are available for inspection at the Commission's Public Document Room, 2120 L Street NW., Washington, DC. Requests for single copies of draft or final guides (which may be reproduced) or for placement on an automatic distribution list for single copies of future draft guides in specific divisions should be made in writing to the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory