

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[Docket No. 50-298]

Nebraska Public Power District; Notice of Consideration of Issuance of Amendment to Facility Operating License, Proposed No Significant Hazards Consideration Determination, and Opportunity for a Hearing

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) is considering issuance of an amendment to Facility Operating License No. DPR-46, issued to Nebraska Public Power District (the licensee), for operation of the Cooper Nuclear Station (CNS) located in Nemaha County, Nebraska.

The proposed amendment in the licensee's application of March 27, 1997, would increase the minimum volume of diesel fuel oil in the fuel oil storage tanks from 48,000 gallons to 49,500 gallons. This change is Document of Change (DOC) 3.8.3-M.2 of the conversion of the current Technical Specifications (CTS) for the CNS to the improved Technical Specifications (ITS) that was noticed in the **Federal Register** on March 17, 1998 (63 FR 13074). DOC 3.8.3-M.2 is the second more restrictive change to ITS Section 3.8.3 for the CNS.

This proposed change would have a value different from the CTS and the Improved Standard Technical Specifications (ISTS) provided in NUREG-1433, "Standard Technical Specifications, General Electric Plants, BWR/4," Revision 1, dated April 1995. The conversion is based on NUREG-1433 and the Commission's "Final Policy Statement on Technical Specifications Improvements for Nuclear Power Reactors," published on July 22, 1993 (58 FR 39132).

The exigent circumstances for this notice is that the staff has recently determined that this change in the minimum volume of diesel fuel oil in the fuel oil storage tanks is beyond the scope of the conversion to the ITS; however, the change should be made to the ITS because the proposed value more properly accounts for the fuel oil needed for the diesel generators during all design basis accidents. The staff expects to issue the ITS for the CNS by July 29, 1998. To allow the staff to include the higher value for the minimum volume of fuel oil in the ITS, it is necessary for the staff to issue of this notice of proposed change to the CTS before July 15, 1998, to meet the requirements in 10 CFR 50.91 on notices for public comment of license amendments.

Before issuance of the proposed license amendment, the Commission

will have made findings required by the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended (the Act) and the Commission's regulations.

Pursuant to 10 CFR 50.91(a)(6) for amendments to be granted under exigent circumstances, the NRC staff must determine that the amendment request involves no significant hazards consideration. Under the Commission's regulations in 10 CFR 50.92, this means that operation of the facility in accordance with the proposed amendment would not (1) involve a significant increase in the probability or consequences of an accident previously evaluated; or (2) create the possibility of a new or different kind of accident from any accident previously evaluated; or (3) involve a significant reduction in a margin of safety. As required by 10 CFR 50.91(a), the licensee has provided its analysis of the issue of no significant hazards consideration, which is presented below:

In accordance with the criteria set forth in 10 CFR 50.92, the Nebraska Public Power District has evaluated this proposed Technical Specifications change and determined it does not represent a significant hazards consideration. The following is provided in support of this conclusion.

1. Does the change involve a significant increase in the probability or consequences of an accident previously evaluated?

The proposed change provides more stringent requirements for operation of the facility. These more stringent requirements do not result in operation that will increase the probability of initiating an analyzed event and do not alter assumptions relative to the mitigation of an accident or transient event. The more restrictive requirements continue to ensure process variables, structures, systems, and components are maintained consistent with safety analyses and [CNS] licensing basis. [The storage of fuel oil is not an initiator of a design basis accident for the CNS and the licensee has an approved fire protection program.] Therefore, this change does not involve a significant increase in the probability or consequences of an accident previously evaluated.

2. Does the change create the possibility of a new or different kind of accident from any accident previously evaluated?

The proposed change does not involve a physical alteration of the plant (no new or different type of equipment will be installed) or changes in the methods governing normal plant operation. The proposed change does impose different requirements.

However, this change is consistent with the assumptions in the safety analyses and [CNS] licensing basis. [The licensee has an approved fire protection program for the hazard of having to store more fuel oil.] Thus, this change does not create the possibility of a new or different kind of accident from any accident previously evaluated.

3. Does this change involve a significant reduction in a margin of safety?

The imposition of more restrictive requirements either has no impact on or increases the margin of plant safety. As provided in the discussion of the change, each change in this category [(more restrictive)] is by definition, providing additional restrictions to enhance plant safety. The change maintains requirements within the safety analyses and [CNS] licensing basis. [The additional amount of diesel fuel oil required will provide additional assurance that there is sufficient fuel oil to run the diesel generators through an event.] Therefore, this change does not involve a significant reduction in a margin of safety.

The NRC staff has reviewed the licensee's analysis and, based on this review, it appears that the three standards of 10 CFR 50.92(c) are satisfied. Therefore, the NRC staff proposes to determine that the amendment request involves no significant hazards consideration.

The Commission is seeking public comments on this proposed determination. Any comments received within 14 days after the date of publication of this notice will be considered in making any final determination.

Normally, the Commission will not issue the amendment until the expiration of the 14-day notice period. However, should circumstances change during the notice period, such that failure to act in a timely way would result, for example, in derating or shutdown of the facility, the Commission may issue the license amendment before the expiration of the 14-day notice period, provided that its final determination is that the amendment involves no significant hazards consideration. The final determination will consider all public and State comments received. Should the Commission take this action, it will publish in the **Federal Register** a notice of issuance. The Commission expects that the need to take this action will occur very infrequently.

Written comments may be submitted by mail to the Chief, Rules and Directives Branch, Division of Administrative Services, Office of

Administration, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001, and should cite the publication date and page number of this **Federal Register** notice. Written comments may also be delivered to Room 6D59, Two White Flint North, 11545 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland, from 7:30 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. Federal workdays. Copies of written comments received may be examined at the NRC Public Document Room, the Gelman Building, 2120 L Street, NW., Washington, DC.

The filing of requests for hearing and petitions for leave to intervene is discussed below. By August 14, 1998, the licensee may file a request for a hearing with respect to issuance of the amendment to the subject facility operating license and any person whose interest may be affected by this proceeding and who wishes to participate as a party in the proceeding must file a written request for a hearing and a petition for leave to intervene. Requests for a hearing and a petition for leave to intervene shall be filed in accordance with the Commission's "Rules of Practice for Domestic Licensing Proceedings" in 10 CFR Part 2. Interested persons should consult a current copy of 10 CFR 2.714 which is available 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 Auburn Memorial Library, 1810 Courthouse Avenue, Auburn, NE 68305. If a request for a hearing or petition for leave to intervene is filed by the above date, the Commission or an Atomic Safety and Licensing Board, designated by the Commission or by the Chairman of the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board Panel, will rule on the request and/or petition; and the Secretary or the designated Atomic Safety and Licensing Board will issue a notice of hearing or an appropriate order.

As required by 10 CFR 2.714, a petition for leave to intervene shall set forth with particularity the interest of the petitioner in the proceeding, and how that interest may be affected by the results of the proceeding. The petition should specifically explain the reasons why intervention should be permitted with particular reference to the following factors: (1) the nature of the petitioner's right under the Act to be made a party to the proceeding; (2) the nature and extent of the petitioner's property, financial, or other interest in the proceeding; and (3) the possible

effect of any order which may be entered in the proceeding on the petitioner's interest. The petition should also identify the specific aspect(s) of the subject matter of the proceeding as to which petitioner wishes to intervene. Any person who has filed a petition for leave to intervene or who has been admitted as a party may amend the petition without requesting leave of the Board up to 15 days prior to the first prehearing conference scheduled in the proceeding, but such an amended petition must satisfy the specificity requirements described above.

Not later than 15 days prior to the first prehearing conference scheduled in the proceeding, a petitioner shall file a supplement to the petition to intervene which must include a list of the contentions which are sought to be litigated in the matter. Each contention must consist of a specific statement of the issue of law or fact to be raised or controverted. In addition, the petitioner shall provide a brief explanation of the bases of the contention and a concise statement of the alleged facts or expert opinion which support the contention and on which the petitioner intends to rely in proving the contention at the hearing. The petitioner must also provide references to those specific sources and documents of which the petitioner is aware and on which the petitioner intends to rely to establish those facts or expert opinion. Petitioner must provide sufficient information to show that a genuine dispute exists with the applicant on a material issue of law or fact. Contentions shall be limited to matters within the scope of the amendment under consideration. The contention must be one which, if proven, would entitle the petitioner to relief. A petitioner who fails to file such a supplement which satisfies these requirements with respect to at least one contention will not be permitted to participate as a party.

Those permitted to intervene become parties to the proceeding, subject to any limitations in the order granting leave to intervene, and have the opportunity to participate fully in the conduct of the hearing, including the opportunity to present evidence and cross-examine witnesses.

If the amendment is issued before the expiration of the 30-day hearing period, the Commission will make a final determination on the issue of no significant hazards consideration. If a hearing is requested, the final

determination will serve to decide when the hearing is held.

If the final determination is that the amendment request involves no significant hazards consideration, the Commission may issue the amendment and make it immediately effective, notwithstanding the request for a hearing. Any hearing held would take place after issuance of the amendment.

If the final determination is that the amendment request involves a significant hazards consideration, any hearing held would take place before the issuance of any amendment.

A request for a hearing or a petition for leave to intervene must be filed with the Secretary of the Commission, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001, Attention: Rulemakings and Adjudications Staff, or may be delivered to the Commission's Public Document Room, the Gelman Building, 2120 L Street, NW., Washington, DC, by the above date. A copy of the petition should also be sent to the Office of the General Counsel, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001, and to Mr. John R. McPhail, Nebraska Public Power District, Post Office Box 499, Columbus, NE 68602-0499, attorney for the licensee.

Nontimely filings of petitions for leave to intervene, amended petitions, supplemental petitions and/or requests for hearing will not be entertained absent a determination by the Commission, the presiding officer or the presiding Atomic Safety and Licensing Board that the petition and/or request should be granted based upon a balancing of the factors specified in 10 CFR 2.714(a)(1)(i)-(v) and 2.714(d).

For further details with respect to this action, see the application for amendment dated March 27, 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 Auburn Memorial Library, 1810 Courthouse Avenue, Auburn, NE 68305.

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

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Jack N. Donohew,

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