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NRC AMENDS REGULATIONS TO ADD  
AN ADDITIONAL FUEL STORAGE CASK DESIGN TO APPROVED LIST

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is amending its regulations to add an additional fuel storage cask design to its list of those that utilities can use, under a general license and without further NRC approval, to store spent fuel temporarily at their nuclear power plant sites. Consumers Power Co. plans to use casks of this design to store spent fuel at its Palisades nuclear power plant near South Haven, Mich.

The addition will bring to five the total number of fuel storage cask designs approved for use under a general license.

The new VSC-24 design is manufactured by Pacific Sierra Nuclear Associates, and the NRC staff issued its Safety Evaluation Report on the design in March of last year. In addition, the staff will issue a Certificate of Compliance with the agency's safety requirements and has prepared an environmental assessment and finding of no significant impact with respect to the action.

A notice of proposed rulemaking, which also included a second design proposed by Transnuclear, Inc., was issued for a 75-day public comment period in June 1992. An additional 30-day comment period was provided earlier this year to give the public an opportunity to comment on additional information on the Pacific Sierra Nuclear Associates' design that was placed in the NRC's Public Document Room in Washington, DC, and all NRC Local Public Document Rooms.

That information had previously been classified as proprietary by the cask vendor. However, the NRC's regulations stipulate that all information provided to the agency as part of a rulemaking proceeding and later used as the basis for a final rule will not be withheld from public disclosure.

The Transnuclear, Inc., TN-24 design will be the subject of a separate rulemaking proceedings after an opportunity is provided for public comment on additional information that previously had been classified as proprietary by the vendor.

In addition, at the request of the Michigan Attorney General and citizens concerned about the proposed use of the VCS-24 cask design at the Palisades nuclear power plant, the NRC staff offered to participate in a public meeting in Lansing on February 23 this year. The concerns expressed at that meeting were taken into account in developing the final amendment to the regulations.

Wisconsin Electric Power Company and Entergy, Inc., also have plans to use the cask at their Point Beach (Wisconsin) and Arkansas nuclear power plants respectively.

The amendment to Part 72 of the Commission's regulations will become effective 30 days after publication of a Federal Register notice (expected next week).

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