

September 11, 2000

Mr. Oliver D. Kingsley, President  
Nuclear Generation Group  
Commonwealth Edison Company  
Executive Towers West III  
1400 Opus Place, Suite 500  
Downers Grove, IL 60515

SUBJECT: DRESDEN - ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND FINDING OF NO  
SIGNIFICANT IMPACT RELATED TO AN AMENDMENT ADDING SIEMENS  
RODEX2A METHODOLOGY TO TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS (TAC NOS.  
MA6233 AND MA6234)

Dear Mr. Kingsley:

Enclosed is a copy of the Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact related to your application for the Dresden Nuclear Power Station, Units 2 and 3, dated August 3, 1999, as supplemented on February 25, 2000. Your application requested that the Siemens RODEX2A methodology be added to Technical Specifications Section 6.9.A.6 as an approved analytical method for use in determining core operating limits.

The environmental assessment has been forwarded to the Office of the Federal Register for publication.

Sincerely,

*/RA/*

Lawrence W. Rossbach, Project Manager, Section 2  
Project Directorate III  
Division of Licensing Project Management  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket Nos. 50-237 and 50-249

Enclosure: Environmental Assessment

cc w/encl: See next page

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\*see previous concurrence

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OFFICIAL RECORD COPY

O. Kingsley  
Commonwealth Edison Company

Dresden Nuclear Power Station  
Units 2 and 3

cc:

Commonwealth Edison Company  
Site Vice President - Dresden  
6500 N. Dresden Road  
Morris, Illinois 60450-9765

Mr. David Helwig  
Senior Vice President  
Commonwealth Edison Company  
Executive Towers West III  
1400 Opus Place, Suite 900  
Downers Grove, Illinois 60515

Commonwealth Edison Company  
Dresden Station Manager  
6500 N. Dresden Road  
Morris, Illinois 60450-9765

Mr. Gene H. Stanley  
Vice President - Nuclear Operations  
Commonwealth Edison Company  
Executive Towers West III  
1400 Opus Place, Suite 900  
Downers Grove, Illinois 60515

U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
Dresden Resident Inspectors Office  
6500 N. Dresden Road  
Morris, Illinois 60450-9766

Mr. Christopher Crane  
Senior VP - Nuclear Operations  
Commonwealth Edison Company  
Executive Towers West III  
1400 Opus Place, Suite 900  
Downers Grove, Illinois 60515

Regional Administrator  
U.S. NRC, Region III  
801 Warrenville Road  
Lisle, Illinois 60532-4351

Mr. R. M. Krich  
Vice President - Regulatory Services  
Commonwealth Edison Company  
Executive Towers West III  
1400 Opus Place, Suite 500  
Downers Grove, Illinois 60515

Illinois Department of Nuclear Safety  
Office of Nuclear Facility Safety  
1035 Outer Park Drive  
Springfield, Illinois 62704

Chairman  
Grundy County Board  
Administration Building  
1320 Union Street  
Morris, Illinois 60450

Ms. Pamela B. Stroebel  
Senior Vice President and General Counsel  
Commonwealth Edison Company  
P.O. Box 767  
Chicago, Illinois 60690-0767

Document Control Desk-Licensing  
Commonwealth Edison Company  
1400 Opus Place, Suite 400  
Downers Grove, Illinois 60515

Sherry Kamke, Acting (5)  
Environmental Review Coordinator  
US EPA Region 5  
77 W. Jackson Blvd.  
Chicago, Illinois 60604-3507

Commonwealth Edison Company  
Reg. Assurance Manager - Dresden  
6500 N. Dresden Road  
Morris, Illinois 60450-9765

UNITED STATES NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION  
COMMONWEALTH EDISON COMPANY  
DOCKET NOS. 50-237 AND 50-249  
DRESDEN NUCLEAR POWER STATION, UNITS 2 AND 3  
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND FINDING OF  
NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is considering issuance of an amendment to Facility Operating Licenses Nos. DPR-19 and DPR-25, issued to Commonwealth Edison Company (ComEd, or the licensee) for operation of the Dresden Nuclear Power Station, Units 2 and 3, located in Grundy County, Illinois.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Identification of the Proposed Action:

The proposed action would add the Siemens Power Corporation RODEX2A methodology to the Dresden, Units 2 and 3, Technical Specifications (TSs) list of approved methodologies that may be used to determine core operating limits. The proposed action also adds a condition to the Dresden, Units 2 and 3, licenses to limit the maximum rod average burnup to 60 gigawatt-days per metric ton of uranium (GWD/MTU). Adding the RODEX2A methodology to the TSs will permit the use of extended fuel burnup limits. RODEX2A supports maximum rod average burnups to 62 GWD/MTU and uranium-235 (U-235) enrichments up to 5 percent by weight. However, the license condition will limit burnup to 60 GWD/MTU until the completion of an NRC Environmental Assessment supporting increased limits.

The proposed action is in accordance with the licensee's application for amendment dated August 3, 1999, as supplemented by letter dated February 25, 2000.

The Need for the Proposed Action:

The proposed action is needed in order for the licensee to have the flexibility to use fuel with increased burnup. The changes in operating parameters and limits will allow longer operating cycles and result in fewer fuel assemblies being needed.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action:

The NRC has completed its evaluation of the proposed action and concludes that, although the extended burnup may slightly change the mix of radionuclides that might be released in the event of an accident, there are no significant adverse environmental impacts associated with the proposed action.

The staff published "Extended Burnup Fuel Use in Commercial LWR's; Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact" on February 29, 1988 (53 FR 6040). This generic environmental assessment of extended fuel burnup in light water reactors found that "no significant adverse effects will be generated by increasing the present batch-average burnup level of 33 GWD/MTU to 50 GWD/MTU or above as long as the maximum rod average burnup level of any fuel rod is no greater than 60 GWD/MTU." In addition, the environmental impacts of transportation resulting from the use of higher enrichment fuel and extended irradiation were published and discussed in the staff assessment entitled, "NRC Assessment of the Environmental Effects of Transportation Resulting from Extended Fuel Enrichment and Irradiation," dated July 7, 1988. That assessment was published in connection with an Environmental Assessment related to the Sheron Harris Nuclear Plant, Unit 1, which was published in the FEDERAL REGISTER on August 11, 1988 (53 FR 30355), as corrected on August 24, 1988 (53 FR 32322). In these assessments, collectively, the staff concluded that the environmental impacts summarized in Table S-3 of 10 CFR 51.51 and in Table S-4 of 10 CFR 51.52 for a burnup level of 33 GWD/MTU and enrichments up to 4 weight percent U-235

are conservative and bound the corresponding impacts for burnup levels up to 60 GWD/MTU and enrichments up to 5 weight percent U-235. These findings are applicable to the proposed action at Dresden which will limit burnup to 60 GWD/MTU and allow enrichments up to 5 weight percent U-235.

The proposed action will not significantly increase the probability or consequences of accidents, no significant changes are being made in the types of any effluents that may be released offsite, and there is no significant increase in occupational or public radiation exposure. Therefore, there are no significant radiological environmental impacts associated with the proposed action.

With regard to potential nonradiological environmental impacts, the proposed action does not involve any historic sites. It does not affect nonradiological plant effluents and has no other environmental impact. Therefore, there are no significant nonradiological impacts associated with the proposed action.

Accordingly, the NRC concludes that there are no significant environmental impacts associated with the proposed action.

Alternatives to the Proposed Action:

As an alternative to the proposed action, the staff considered denial of the proposed action (i.e., the “no-action” alternative). Denial of the application 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 for the Dresden Nuclear Power Station, Units 2 and 3, dated November 1973.

Agencies and Persons Consulted:

In accordance with its stated policy, on May 12, 2000, the staff consulted with the Illinois State official, Frank Niziolek of the Illinois Department of Nuclear Safety, regarding the environmental impact of the proposed action. The State official had no comments.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

On the basis of the environmental assessment, the NRC 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 August 3, 1999, as supplemented on February 25, 2000, which are available for public inspection at the NRC Public Document Room, The Gelman Building, 2120 L Street, NW., Washington, DC. Publicly available records will be accessible electronically from the ADAMS Public Library component on the NRC Web site, <http://www.nrc.gov> (the Electronic Reading Room).

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 11th day of September 2000.

FOR THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

*/RA/*

Anthony J. Mendiola, Chief, Section 2  
Project Directorate III  
Division of Licensing Project Management  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation