

Mr. James Knubel
Chief Nuclear Officer
Power Authority of the State
of New York
125 Main Street
White Plains, NY 10601

March 25, 1997

SUBJECT: ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT,
INDIAN POINT NUCLEAR GENERATING UNIT NO. 3 (TAC NO. M96474)

Dear Mr. Knubel:

Enclosed is a copy of the Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact related to your application for amendment dated November 22, 1996. The proposed action will allow the storage of fuel assemblies with nominal enrichments up to 5.0 weight percent Uranium 235.

The assessment is being forwarded to the Office of the Federal Register for publication.

Sincerely,

/s/

George F. Wunder, Project Manager
Project Directorate I-1
Division of Reactor Projects - I/II
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket No. 50-286

Enclosure: Environmental Assessment

cc w/encl: See next page

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UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

March 25, 1997

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A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "George F. Wunder".

George F. Wunder, Project Manager
Project Directorate I-1
Division of Reactor Projects - I/II
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket No. 50-286

Enclosure: Environmental Assessment

cc w/encl: See next page

James Knubel
Power Authority of the State
of New York

Indian Point Nuclear Generating
Station Unit No. 3

cc:

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UNITED STATES NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
POWER AUTHORITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK
DOCKET NO. 50-286
INDIAN POINT NUCLEAR GENERATING UNIT NO. 3
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-64 issued to the Power Authority of the State of New York (the licensee) for the Indian Point Nuclear Generating Unit No. 3, located in Westchester County, New York.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Identification of Proposed Action

The proposed amendment would include provisions in Technical Specifications (TS) 5.3 and 5.4 which allow for the storage of fuel with an enrichment not to exceed 4.95 + 0.05 weight percent (w/o) Uranium 235 (U-235) in the new and spent fuel storage racks and would revise requirements governing the placement of fuel assemblies in the fuel storage pit. The proposed action is in accordance with the licensee's application for amendment dated November 22, 1996.

The Need for Proposed Action:

The proposed changes are needed so that the licensee can use higher fuel enrichment to provide the flexibility of extending the fuel irradiation and to permit operation for longer fuel cycles.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action

The Commission has completed its evaluation of the proposed revisions to

the TS. The proposed revisions would permit use of fuel enriched to a nominal 5.0 w/o U-235. The safety considerations associated with reactor operation with higher enrichment and extended irradiation have been evaluated by the NRC staff. The staff has concluded that such changes would not adversely affect plant safety. The proposed changes have no adverse effect on the probability of any accident. The higher enrichment, with increased fuel 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 consequences of serious accidents. No changes are being made in the types or amounts of any radiological effluents that may be released offsite. There is no significant increase in the allowable individual or cumulative occupational radiation exposure.

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. This assessment was published in connection with an Environmental Assessment related to the Shearon Harris Nuclear Plant, Unit 1, which was published in the Federal Register (53 FR 30355) on August 11, 1988, as corrected on August 24, 1988 (53 FR 32322). As indicated therein, the environmental cost contribution of an increase in the fuel enrichment of up to 5 weight percent U-235 and irradiation limits of up to 60,000 gigawatt days per metric ton (GWD/MT) 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). These findings are applicable to the proposed increase at Indian Point given that the proposal involves 5% and burnup of less than 60,000 gigawatt days per metric

ton (GWD/MT). Accordingly, the Commission concludes that there are no significant radiological environmental impacts associated with the proposed amendment.

With regard to potential non-radiological impacts of reactor operation with higher enrichment and extended irradiation, the proposed action involves features located entirely within the restricted area as defined in 10 CFR Part 20. It does not affect non-radiological plant effluents and has no other environmental impact. Accordingly, the Commission concludes that there are no significant non-radiological environmental impacts associated with the proposed action.

Alternative to the Proposed Action

Since the Commission concluded that there are no significant environmental effects that would result from the proposed action, any other alternative would have equal or greater environmental impacts and need not be evaluated.

The principal alternative would be to deny the requested amendment. This would not reduce the environmental impact of plant operations and would result in reduced operational flexibility.

Alternative Use of Resources

This action does not involve the use of any resources not previously considered in the Final Environmental Statement related to operation of Indian Point Nuclear Generating Unit No. 3.

Agencies and Persons Consulted

In accordance with its stated policy, on December 12, 1996, the staff consulted with the New York State official, Heidi Voelk, of the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority regarding the environmental impact

of the proposed action. The state official had no comments.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

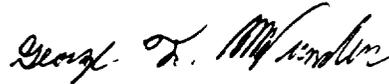
The Commission has determined not to prepare an environmental impact statement for the proposed license amendment.

Based upon the foregoing environmental assessment, we conclude that the proposed action will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment.

For further details with respect to this action, see the application for amendment dated November 22, 1996, that 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 for the Indian Point Nuclear Generating Unit No. 3, at White Plains Public Library, 100 Martine Avenue, White Plains, New York.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 26th day of March 1997.

FOR THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION



George F. Wunder, Project Manager
Project Directorate I-1
Division of Reactor Projects I/II
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation