

April 27, 1998

Mr. Robert G. Byram  
Senior Vice President-Generation  
and Chief Nuclear Officer  
Pennsylvania Power and Light  
Company  
2 North Ninth Street  
Allentown, PA 18101

SUBJECT: ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT,  
SUSQUEHANNA STEAM ELECTRIC STATION, UNITS 1 AND 2 (TAC NOS.  
M97365 AND M97366)

Dear Mr. Byram:

Enclosed is a copy of the Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact related to your application for amendment dated November 27, 1996, as supplemented by letter dated February 12, 1997. This proposed amendment to the Technical Specifications would modify the Rod Block Monitor (RBM) flow biased trip setpoints and also the RBM channel calibration frequency and allowed outage times.

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

Sincerely,

/s/

Victor Nerses, Senior Project Manager  
Project Directorate I-2  
Division of Reactor Projects - I/II  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket Nos. 50-387/50-388

Enclosure: Environmental Assessment

cc w/encl: See next page

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UNITED STATES  
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Victor Nerses".

Victor Nerses, Senior Project Manager  
Project Directorate I-2  
Division of Reactor Projects - I/II  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket Nos. 50-387/50-388

Enclosure: Environmental Assessment

cc w/encl: See next page

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UNITED STATES NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION  
PENNSYLVANIA POWER AND LIGHT COMPANY  
DOCKET NOS. 50-387 AND 50-388  
SUSQUEHANNA STEAM ELECTRIC STATION, UNITS 1 AND 2  
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND FINDING OF  
NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) is considering issuance of amendments to Facility Operating License Nos. NPF-44 and NPF-22, issued to Pennsylvania Power and Light Company (PP&L, the licensee), for operation of the Susquehanna Steam Electric Station (SSES), Units 1 and 2, located in Luzerne County, Pennsylvania.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Identification of the Proposed Action:

The proposed action would amend the Technical Specifications (TSs) to increase the Rod Block Monitor (RBM) flow biased trip setpoints and also change the RBM channel calibration frequency and allowed outage times.

The proposed action is in accordance with the licensee's application for amendment dated November 27, 1996, as supplemented by letter dated February 12, 1997.

The Need for the Proposed Action:

The RBM was originally designed to prevent fuel damage during a Rod Withdrawal Error (RWE) event while operating in the power range in a normal mode of operation. The RWE analyses originally assumed that the RBM automatically actuated to stop control rod motion. This automatic stop of control rod motion is the sole design basis of the RBM.

As a result of rod drift events at SSES, the RWE is currently analyzed without taking credit for the RBM to stop control rod motion. The results of these analyses are operating limits that prevent fuel damage from an RWE without the need for an RBM system to automatically actuate to stop control rod motion.

The licensee considered that the RBM system was no longer needed and could be removed from the TSs and in 1996 requested approval from the NRC to remove it. The NRC decided that an acceptable alternative was a proposal to raise the RBM setpoints to reduce its operational impacts. This proposed amendment is about raising the RBM setpoints.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action:

The Commission has completed its evaluation of the proposed action and concludes that the RBM was initially considered as a system that would prevent fuel damage during an RWE event while operating in the power range in a normal mode of operation. However, the licensee's results of their analyses show that the RBM is not required to prevent fuel damage and the staff agrees with this.

Further, it is noted that with this TS change, the licensee will find the need to do fewer control rod pattern adjustments and a reduction in nuisance alarms. In addition to this, the change should reduce operator interaction with the system (reducing possible man-to-machine interface problems).

The TS changes will not increase the probability or consequences of accidents, no changes are being made in the types of any effluents that may be released offsite, and there is 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 action does involve features located entirely within the restricted area as defined in 10 CFR Part 20. It does not affect nonradiological plant effluents and has no other environmental impact. Accordingly, the Commission concludes that there are no significant nonradiological environmental impacts associated with the proposed action.

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. 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 SSES, Units 1 and 2.

Agencies and Persons Consulted:

In accordance with its stated policy, on February 18, 1998, the staff consulted with the Pennsylvania State official, S. Maingi of the Bureau of Radiation Protection, regarding the environmental impact of the proposed action. The State official had no comments.

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 November 27, 1996, as supplemented by letter dated February 12, 1997, which are 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 Osterhout Free Library, Reference Department, 71 South Franklin Street, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania 18701.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 27th day of April 1998.

FOR THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION



Victor Nerses, Senior Project Manager  
Project Directorate I-2  
Division of Reactor Projects - I/II  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation