

Docket No. 50-333

Power Authority of the State of New York
ATTN: George T. Berry
General Manager & Chief Engineer
10 Columbus Circle
New York, New York 10019

Gentlemen:

The Commission has requested the Federal Register to publish the enclosed Notice of Proposed Issuance of an amendment to Facility Operating License No. DPR-59 for the James A. FitzPatrick Nuclear Power Plant. The proposed amendment includes a change to the Technical Specifications and reflects your acceptance, by letter dated July 30, 1975, of our proposal of July 15, 1975.

This amendment incorporates: (1) water temperature limits during any testing which adds heat to the suppression pool, (2) suppression pool water temperature limits requiring manual scram of the reactor, (3) suppression pool water temperature limits requiring reactor pressure vessel depressurization, (4) surveillance requirements to monitor water temperatures during operations which add heat to the suppression pool and (5) external visual examinations of the suppression chambers following operations in which the pool temperatures exceed 160°F.

Copies of the related Safety Evaluation and the Federal Register Notice are enclosed.

Sincerely,

RS

Robert W. Reid, Chief
Operating Reactors Branch #4
Division of Reactor Licensing

Enclosures:

1. Federal Register Notice
2. Safety Evaluation

cc w/enclosures:
See next page

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Nov. 17, 1975

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Power Authority of the State
of New York

cc w/enclosures:

Scott B. Lilly, General Counsel
Power Authority of the
State of New York
10 Columbus Circle
New York, New York 10019

Arvin E. Upton, Esquire
LeBoeuf, Lamb, Leiby and MacRae
1757 N Street, NW.
Washington, D. C. 20036

Lauman Martin, Esquire
Senior Vice President
and General Counsel
Niagara Mohawk Corporation
300 Eric Boulevard West
Syracuse, New York 13202

Mr. Z. Chilazi
Power Authority of the
State of New York
10 Columbus Circle
New York, New York 10019

J. Bruce MacDonald, Deputy
Commissioner and Counsel
New York State Department of
Commerce and Counsel to the
Atomic Energy Council
99 Washington Avenue
Albany, New York 12210

Ecology Action
c/o Richard Goldsmith
Syracuse University
College of Law
E. I. White Hall Campus
Syracuse, New York 13210

Ms. Suzanne Weber
R.D. #3, West Lake Road
Oswego, New York 13126

Oswego City Library
120 East Second Street
Oswego, New York 13126

Mr. Robert P. Jones, Supervisor
Town of Scriba
R. D. #4
Oswego, New York 13126

Mr. Alvin L. Karkau
Chairman, County Legislature
County Office Building
46 East Bridge Street
Oswego, New York 13126

cc w/enclosures & incoming:
Dr. William E. Seymour
Staff Coordinator
New York State Atomic Energy
Council
New York State Department of
Commerce
112 State Street
Albany, New York 12207

Anthony Z. Roisman, Esquire
Berlin, Roisman & Kessler
1712 N Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20036

UNITED STATES NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

DOCKET NO. 50-333

POWER AUTHORITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK

AND

NIAGARA MOHAWK POWER CORPORATION

NOTICE OF PROPOSED ISSUANCE OF AMENDMENT
TO FACILITY OPERATING LICENSE

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) is considering issuance of an amendment to Facility Operating License No. DPR-59 issued to Power Authority of the State of New York and Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation (the co-licensees), for operation of the James A. FitzPatrick Nuclear Power Plant located in Oswego County, New York.

The amendment would revise the provisions in the Technical Specifications relating to temperature limits for the pressure suppression pool water.

Prior to issuance of the proposed license amendment, the Commission will have made the findings required by the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended (the Act) and the Commission's rules and regulations.

By Dec. 24, 1975 the licensee may file a request for a hearing and any person whose interest may be affected by this proceeding may file a request for a hearing in the form of a petition for leave to intervene with respect to the issuance of the amendment to the subject facility operating license. Petitions for leave to intervene must be filed under oath or affirmation in accordance with the provisions of Section 2.714 of 10 CFR Part 2 of the Commission's regulations. A

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petition for leave to intervene must set forth the interest of the petitioner in the proceeding, how that interest may be affected by the results of the proceeding, and the petitioner's contentions with respect to the proposed licensing action. Such petitions must be filed in accordance with the provisions of this FEDERAL REGISTER notice and Section 2.714, and must be filed with the Secretary of the Commission, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, D.C. 20555, Attention: Docketing and Service Section, by the above date. A copy of the petition and/or request for a hearing should be sent to the Executive Legal Director, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, D.C. 20555, and to Arvin E. Upton, Esquire, LeBoeuf, Lamb, Leiby & MacRae, 1757 N Street, NW., Washington, D.C. 20036, the attorney for the licensee.

A petition for leave to intervene must be accompanied by a supporting affidavit which identifies the specific aspect or aspects of the proceeding as to which intervention is desired and specifies with particularity the facts on which the petitioner relies as to both his interest and his contentions with regard to each aspect on which intervention is requested. Petitions stating contentions relating only to matters outside the Commission's jurisdiction will be denied.

All petitions will be acted upon by the Commission or licensing board, designated by the Commission or by the Chairman of the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board Panel. Timely petitions will be considered to determine whether a hearing should be noticed or another appropriate order issued regarding the disposition of the petitions.

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In the event that a hearing is held and a person is permitted to intervene, he becomes a party to the proceeding and has a right to participate fully in the conduct of the hearing. For example, he may present evidence and examine and cross-examine witnesses.

For further details with respect to this action, see the letter from K. Goller to G. T. Berry dated July 15, 1975, and the letter from G. T. Berry to K. Goller dated July 30, 1975, which are available for public inspection at the Commission's Public Document Room, 1717 H Street, NW., Washington, D.C. and at the Oswego City Library, 120 E. Second Street, Oswego, New York 13126. The Safety Evaluation, may be inspected at the above locations and a copy may be obtained upon request addressed to the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, D.C. 20555, Attention: Director, Division of Reactor Licensing.

Dated at Bethesda, Maryland, this 17th day of November

FOR THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

15/

Vernon S. Rooney, Acting Chief
Operating Reactors Branch #4
Division of Reactor Licensing

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UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20555

SAFETY EVALUATION BY THE OFFICE OF NUCLEAR REACTOR REGULATION

SUPPORTING AMENDMENT TO LICENSE NO. DPR-59

AND CHANGE TO THE TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

SUPPRESSION POOL WATER TEMPERATURE LIMITS

POWER AUTHORITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK

AND

NIAGARA MOHAWK POWER CORPORATION

JAMES A. FITZPATRICK NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

DOCKET NO. 50-333

Introduction

By letter dated July 15, 1975, to Power Authority of the State of New York (PASNY), the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) stated that we plan to initiate steps to amend their Technical Specifications related to suppression pool (torus) water temperature limits. By letter dated July 30, 1975, PASNY agreed to adopt the Technical Specifications we appended to our July 15, 1975 letter. These changes are needed to assure proper operation and integrity of the pressure suppression primary containment system.

Discussion

The FitzPatrick Plant is a boiling water reactor (BWR) which is housed in a Mark I primary containment. The Mark I primary containment is a pressure suppression type of primary containment that consists of a drywell and a suppression chamber (also referred to as the torus). The suppression chamber, or torus, contains a pool of water and is designed to suppress the pressure during a postulated loss-of-coolant accident (LOCA) by condensing the steam released from the reactor primary system. The reactor system energy released by relief valve operation during the operating transients also is released into the pool of water in the torus.

REC'D w/pjr 11/17/76

Experiences at various BWR plants with Mark I Containments have shown that damage to the torus structure can occur from two phenomena associated with relief valve operations. Damage can result from the forces exerted on the structure when, on first opening the relief valves, steam and the air within the vent are discharged into the torus water. This phenomenon is referred to as steam vent clearing. The second source of potential structural damage stems from the vibrations which accompany extended relief valve discharge into the torus water if the pool water is at elevated temperatures. This effect is known as the steam quenching vibration phenomenon.

A. Steam Vent Clearing Phenomenon

With regard to the steam vent clearing phenomenon, we are actively reviewing this generic problem and in our letter dated February 13, 1975, we also requested the licensee to provide information to demonstrate that the torus structure of the primary containment will maintain its integrity throughout the anticipated life of the facility. By letter dated August 1, 1975, the licensee requested that the General Electric Report NED-20942 P, addressing this problem, be made part of the FitzPatrick docket. Because of the apparent slow progression of the material fatigue associated with the steam vent clearing phenomenon, we have concluded that there is no immediate potential hazard resulting from this type of phenomenon; nevertheless, surveillance and review action on this matter by the NRC staff will continue in due course during this year.

B. Steam Quenching Vibration Phenomenon

The steam quenching vibration phenomenon became a concern as a result of occurrences at two European reactors. With torus pool water temperatures increased in excess of 170F due to prolonged steam quenching from relief valve operation, hydrodynamic fluid vibrations occurred with subsequent moderate to high relief valve flow rates. These fluid vibrations produced large dynamic loads on the torus structure and extensive damage to torus internal structures. If allowed to continue, the dynamic loads could have resulted in structural damage to the torus itself, due to material fatigue. Thus, the reported occurrences of the steam quenching vibration phenomenon at the two European reactors indicate that actual or incipient failure of the torus can occur from such an event. Such failure would be expected to involve cracking of the torus wall and loss of containment integrity. Moreover, if a LOCA occurred simultaneously with or after such an event, the consequences could be excessive radiological doses to the public. In comparison with the steam vent clearing phenomenon, the potential risk associated with the steam quenching vibration phenomenon (1) reflects the fact that

a generally smaller safety margin^{1/} exists between the present license requirements on suppression pool temperature limits and the point at which damage could begin and (2) is more immediate.

Evaluation

The existing Technical Specifications limit the torus pool temperature to 95F. This temperature limit assures that the pool water has the capability to perform as a constantly available heat-sink with a reasonable operating temperature that can be maintained by use of heat exchangers whose secondary cooling water (the service cooling water) is expected to remain well below 95F. While this 95F limit provides normal operating flexibility, short-term temperatures of 130F permitted by technical specifications exceed the normal power operating temperature limit, but accommodates the heat release resulting from abnormal operation, such as relief valve malfunction, while still maintaining the required heat-sink (absorption) capacity of the pool water needed for the postulated LOCA conditions. However, in view of the potential risk associated with the steam quenching vibration phenomenon, it is necessary to modify the temperature limits now in the license Technical Specifications. This action was, as discussed in our February 13, 1975 letter, first suggested by the General Electric Company (GE) who had earlier informed us of the steam quenching vibration occurrences at a meeting on November 1, 1974, and provided related information by letters to us dated November 7, and December 20, 1974. The December 20 letter stated that GE had informed all of its customers with operating BWR facilities and Mark I containments of the phenomenon and included in those communications GE's recommended interim operating temperature limits and proposed operating procedures to minimize the probability of encountering the damaging regime of the steam quenching vibration phenomenon.

Our implementation of the GE recommended procedures and temperature limits via changes in the Technical Specifications are evaluated in the following paragraphs:

- a. The new short-term limit applicable to all conditions requires that the reactor be scrammed if the torus pool water temperature reaches 110F. This new limit and associated requirement to scram the reactor provides additional margin below the 170F temperature related to potential damage to the torus. Since the current Technical Specifications permit the torus pool water temperature to reach 130F in the event of a relief valve malfunction before requiring the reactor to be scrammed, reducing this limit to 110F provides an additional margin of 20F for absorption of reactor core decay heat.

^{1/}The difference, in pool water temperature, between the license limit(s) and the temperature at which structural damage might occur is the safety margin available to protect against the effects of the phenomenon discussed.

- b. For specific requirements associated with surveillance testing, i.e., testing of relief valves, the water temperature shall not exceed 10F above the normal power operation limit. This new limit during surveillance testing of relief valves provides operating flexibility while still maintaining a maximum heat-sink capacity.
- c. For reactor isolation conditions, the new temperature limit is 120F, above which temperature the reactor vessel is to be depressurized. This new limit of 120F assures pool capacity for absorption of heat released to the torus while avoiding undesirable reactor vessel cooldown transients. Upon reaching 120F, the reactor is placed in the cold, shutdown condition at the fastest rate consistent with the technical specifications on reactor pressure vessel cooldown rates.
- d. In addition to the new limits on temperature of the torus pool water, the discussion in the Basis includes a summary of required operator actions to be taken in the event of a relief valve malfunction. These operating actions are taken in order to avoid the development of temperatures approaching the 170F threshold for potential damage by the steam quenching phenomenon.

Conclusion

We have concluded, based on the consideration discussed above that: (1) there is reasonable assurance that the health and safety of the public will not be endangered by operation in the proposed manner, and (2) such activities will be conducted in compliance with the Commission's regulations and the issuance of this amendment will not be inimical to the common defense and security or to the health and safety of the public.

Date: November 17, 1975