

May 18, 2001

LICENSEE: Energy Northwest

FACILITY: Washington Nuclear Project No. 1 (WNP-1)

SUBJECT: SUMMARY OF MAY 3, 2001, TO DISCUSS THE STATUS OF WNP-1

On May 3, 2001, the U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) staff held a public meeting with representatives of Energy Northwest (the licensee) at Rockville, Maryland, to discuss the status of Washington Nuclear Project No. 1 (WNP-1). Specifically, Energy Northwest briefed the staff on a viability study it had commissioned to determine if WNP-1 project completion is feasible and cost effective. Enclosure 1 to this meeting summary provides a list of the meeting attendees. Enclosure 2 contains a copy of the meeting handouts, which includes an agenda that was used by Energy Northwest and the NRC.

Energy Northwest provided an overview of the viability study, and the NRC staff provided an overview of the future licensing organization. The licensee and the NRC staff then discussed the topics contained in the agenda.

Viability Study Overview

Energy Northwest provided an overview of the viability study's scope, organization, and schedule. The scope of the study is to determine the cost and schedule along with the design constructability and physical consideration of the WNP-1 facility in order to determine if project completion is feasible and cost-effective. The study's organization consists of the following four teams: Energy Northwest, Bechtel/Framatome, an independent assessment contractor, and an independent review team. In all cases, the teams are responsible for preparing a report on issues such as completion cost and schedule, operating cost forecasts, financing options, marketing forecasts, and competing alternatives and recommendations. The handouts, contained in Enclosure 2, provide a table with an overview of each team's responsibilities. In addition to preparing a report, the independent assessment contractor and the independent review team are responsible for reviewing and commenting on reports generated by other teams. An integrated report will contain the reports from the various teams and is scheduled to be publicly released by the end of August 2001. Energy Northwest does not expect a decision on whether to complete the plant for 3 to 18 months from the time the integrated report is released.

Among other tasks, the Bechtel/Framatome team will provide comparisons of completing WNP-1 with existing nuclear alternatives. The existing nuclear alternatives that will be considered are the three designs that have been certified by the NRC under Title 10 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (10 CFR) Part 52 (U.S. Advanced Boiling Water Reactor, System 80+, and AP600 designs).

Energy Northwest stated that the construction of the Babcock and Wilcox 1250 MWe plant is approximately 65 percent complete with approximately 85 percent of the design completed.

The licensee stated that the 85 percent design completion was a high estimate because the design did not include potential technologies that Energy Northwest would consider if plant construction were to resume. For example, the licensee would consider digital instrumentation and control systems as opposed to the analog systems contained in the current design.

Energy Northwest stated that it considers the plant to be in a terminated status. NRC Generic Letter (GL) 87-15, "Policy Statement of Deferred Plants," provides guidance regarding measures that should be considered for reactivation or transfer of ownership of terminated plants. Although the plant is considered to be in a terminated status, Energy Northwest stated that some preservation activities are ongoing. They also stated that the dry climate found in the area is conducive for a long term lay-up of the plant.

Overview of the Future Licensing Organization

Enclosure 2 contains an organization chart of the new Future Licensing Organization (FLO). The project management of WNP-1 has been assigned to FLO because of the announcement by Energy Northwest to revisit the status of WNP-1. One of the tasks of FLO is to perform a future licensing and inspection readiness assessment (FLIRA). The FLIRA is being modeled after a similar readiness assessment that was performed and described in previous NRC documents including SECY-89-104, "Assessment of Future Licensing Capabilities." One of the scenarios discussed in SECY-89-104 is the reactivation of plants that hold currently valid construction permits (CPs).

Discussion Topics

Discussion topics of the meeting included the following: CP extension, NRC resources, NRC review issues, application of risk insights, and the hearing process. In a letter dated April 9, 2001, Energy Northwest requested that the NRC extend the expiration date of the CP from June 1, 2001, to June 1, 2011. The staff stated that it would follow the model of Watts Bar Unit 2, which had its CP extended last year. The staff questioned whether or not it should proceed with processing the request. Because the extension request was filed in a timely manner, the CP will stay in effect past the June 1, 2001, date without any action from the staff. In addition, the staff was reluctant to expend resources if Energy Northwest determines that it is not feasible and cost effective to complete construction. The licensee stated that it expects a decision will take 3 to 18 months regarding completion of WNP-1 from the time the viability study is publicly released in August of 2001. The staff took an action to evaluate whether or not it would process the CP extension request in the near term or delay processing the request pending a decision regarding construction reactivation. The staff stated that it would inform Energy Northwest when a decision had been reached.

Regarding NRC resources and review issues, the staff stated that personnel are available in Region IV to perform construction inspections. However, the effort has not been budgeted and the staff requested that Energy Northwest provide as much notice as possible if construction activities were to resume. The staff also stated that construction inspection procedures do exist but there has been no effort to update and risk-inform the procedures. The effort to update the procedures would need to be considered if construction were to resume.

The staff and the licensee also discussed NRC review issues. Energy Northwest stated that the control room design would need to be updated, if construction were to resume. The licensee also noted that first-of-a-kind testing would need to be done, because WNP-1 has unique features for a Babcock and Wilcox design. The Tennessee Valley Authority's Bellefonte units, which are the same design, were expected to come on-line prior to WNP-1. However, WNP-1 will likely become the lead plant if construction resumes. The applicant questioned whether any safety evaluation report (SER) inputs that had been prepared in the 1980s would be used by the staff. The staff stated that it doubted that it could use the SER inputs because WNP-1 would need to comply with current regulatory requirements and the staff would have to use current review guidance. The staff stated that it would use Watts Bar Unit 1, the last plant to receive an operating license, as the preliminary model to determine how to address dated issues. The staff noted that it would expect that WNP-1 would have to meet the guidance contained in NUREG-0737 and its supplements, "Clarification of TMI Action Plan Requirements." The staff also noted that SECY-89-104 provided a discussion regarding severe accidents for a reactivated plant licensing scenario. Specifically, SECY-89-104 states that "licensing applicants for reactivated plants will be expected to perform an Independent Plant Examination (IPE), as outline in GL 88-20, and address containment vulnerabilities." The staff also noted that it would expect a severe accident mitigation alternative (SAMA) review to be performed and that reasonable actions would be taken based on the results of the review.

With regard to application of risk insights, Energy Northwest questioned if a risk-informed approach to quality assurance and procurement similar to the South Texas exemption request could be used for WNP-1. The staff noted there was a rulemaking initiative in this area for which an advanced noticed of proposed rulemaking has been published. The staff is presently working toward developing a proposed rule. If construction were to resume prior to a rule being issued, the staff noted that WNP-1 could anticipate the rule change and request exemptions consistent with the proposed rule change. This is similar to the process South Texas is using, but the staff noted there were inherent risks with this approach because the exemption requests could be denied. The staff stated that the implementation of other risk-informed changes to the regulations (e.g., risk-informed changes to the large break loss-of-coolant-accident requirements) are in the formative stages, and may not be developed in the time frame to support WNP-1 if construction were to resume. The staff indicated that there were recent changes made to 10 CFR Part 100 and 10 CFR 50.34 for use of an alternate source term that Energy Northwest could consider if it were to resume construction. Energy Northwest also discussed risk-insights that could be used to judge its plant preservation program. The staff noted that use of risk-insights for inspecting the preservation program would be a new application of the methodology. However, it would be consistent with the reactor oversight process currently being used by the staff.

Regarding the hearing process, Energy Northwest noted that there had been a long-deferred Atomic Safety and Licensing Board Panel proceeding that was terminated in 2000. Energy Northwest asked the staff if they were correct in assuming that the public would be provided another opportunity for a hearing regarding the operating license if construction were to resume at the site. The staff stated that it would expect an amendment to the operating license application would be requested by Energy Northwest if construction were to resume. Once this amendment request was received by the staff, the staff would publish a notice of opportunity for hearing regarding the application.

Prior to the conclusion of the meeting the public was provided the opportunity to comment. Ms. Diane Curran, who was at the meeting on behalf of Northwest Environmental Advocates, wanted to know how Northwest Environmental Advocates could be kept informed of activities related to WNP-1. The staff responded that this group is on its distribution list and will therefore, be provided a copy of any correspondence from the NRC to the licensee regarding WNP-1. Energy Northwest indicated that it would develop contacts with the group and keep it informed of its activities regarding WNP-1.

/RA/

Joseph M. Sebrosky, Project Manager
Future Licensing Organization
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket No. 50-460

Construction Permit No. CPR-134

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ACCESSION NUMBER: ML011380537

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Dated: May 18, 2001

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ENERGY NORTHWEST MEETING TO DISCUSS
WNP-1 VIABILITY STUDY
MAY 3, 2001

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