

May 27, 1997

Mr. Donald A. Reid
Vice President, Operations
Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Corporation
Ferry Road
Brattleboro, VT 05301

SUBJECT: VERMONT YANKEE NUCLEAR POWER STATION (TAC NOS. M95442 AND M95149)

Dear Mr. Reid:

Enclosed is a copy of the Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact related to your application dated April 4, 1996, as supplemented by letters dated May 21, 1996, November 4, 1996, December 13, 1996, and January 8, 1996 (sic [1997]), January 15, 1997, and February 19, 1997, for an exemption from the technical requirements of Section III.G and III.L of Appendix R to Title 10 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 50. You proposed (1) to use the automatic depressurization system in conjunction with low pressure injection systems as an alternative post-fire safe shutdown capability for certain fire zones and (2) to use the Vernon tie-line as an alternative to the on-site emergency diesel generator for certain fire events.

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

Sincerely,

Original signed by

Vernon L. Rooney, Senior Project Manager
Project Directorate I-3
Division of Reactor Projects - I/II
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket No. 50-271

Enclosure: Environmental Assessment

cc w/encl: See next page

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cc:

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UNITED STATES NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSIONVERMONT YANKEE NUCLEAR POWER CORPORATIONDOCKET NO. 50-271VERMONT YANKEE NUCLEAR POWER STATIONENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND FINDING OFNO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) is considering issuance of an exemption from Facility Operating License No. DPR-28, issued to Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Corporation (the licensee), for operation of the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Station (the facility) located in Windham County, Vermont.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENTIdentification of Proposed Action:

The proposed exemption would grant relief from the technical requirements of Section III.G and III.L of Appendix R to Title 10 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 50 (1) to use the automatic depressurization system (ADS) in conjunction with low pressure injection systems as an alternative post-fire safe shutdown capability for certain fire zones and (2) to use the Vernon tie-line as an alternative to the on-site emergency diesel generator for certain fire events.

The proposed exemption is in accordance with the licensee's application for exemption dated April 4, 1996, as supplemented by letters dated May 21, 1996, November 4, 1996, December 13, 1996, and January 8, 1996 (sic [1997]).

The Need for the Proposed Action:

The need for this action arises because the licensee requested the use of the ADS in conjunction with low pressure injection systems as an alternative post-fire safe shutdown capability for certain fire zones and (2) to use the Vernon tie-line as an alternative to the on-site emergency diesel generator for certain fire events. This proposal required exemptions from the following sections of Appendix R: Section III.L.2.(b) (maintain the reactor coolant level above the top of the core), and Section III.G.3 (fire detection and fire suppression installed in the area, room or zone under consideration). Section III.L.3 (accommodation of post-fire conditions where offsite power is not available for 72 hours).

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action:

The Commission has completed its evaluation of the proposed exemption and concludes that the proposed exemption will provide sufficient fire protection that there is no increase in the risk of fires at the facility. Consequently, the probability of fires has not been increased and the post-fire radiological releases will not be greater than previously determined, nor does the proposed exemption otherwise affect radiological plant effluents.

The change 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 actions do not affect nonradiological plant effluents and have no other environmental impact. Accordingly, the Commission concludes that there are no significant nonradiological environmental impacts associated with the proposed actions.

Alternatives to the Proposed Actions:

Since the Commission has concluded there is no measurable environmental impact associated with the proposed actions, any alternatives with equal or greater environmental impact need not be evaluated. As an alternative to the proposed actions, the staff considered denial of the proposed actions. Denial of the application would result in no change in current environmental impacts. The environmental impacts of the proposed actions and the alternative action are similar.

Alternative Use of Resources:

These actions do not involve use of resources not previously considered in the Final Environmental Statement for the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Station.

Agencies and Persons Consulted:

In accordance with its stated policy, on April 3, 1997, the staff consulted with the Vermont State official, Mr. William K. Sherman of the Vermont Department of Public Service, regarding the environmental impact of the proposed actions. The State official had no comments.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Based upon the environmental assessment, the Commission concludes that the proposed actions 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 exemption.

For further details with respect to the proposed action, see the application dated April 4, 1996, as supplemented May 21, 1996, and supporting information dated November 4, 1996, December 13, 1996, January 8, 1996 (sic [1997]), January 15, 1997, and February 19, 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 Brooks Memorial Library, 224 Main Street, Brattleboro, VT 05301.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland this 27th day of May 1997.

FOR THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patrick A. Milano". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Patrick A. Milano, Acting Director
Project Directorate I-3
Division of Reactor Projects - I/II
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation