

July 26, 1996

Mr. Leon R. Eliason  
Chief Nuclear Officer & President-  
Nuclear Business Unit  
Public Service Electric and Gas  
Company  
Post Office Box 236  
Hancocks Bridge, NJ 08038

SUBJECT: ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT FOR  
AN EXEMPTION FROM 10 CFR PART 55, "OPERATORS' LICENSES," SALEM  
NUCLEAR GENERATING STATION, UNITS 1 AND 2 (TAC NOS. M95366 AND  
M95367)

Dear Mr. Eliason:

Enclosed is a copy of the Environmental Assessment and Finding of No  
Significant Impact related to your application for exemption dated May 10,  
1996, as supplemented by letters dated June 20, 1996, and July 9, 1996. The  
proposed exemption would permit several operator license applicants to receive  
operator licenses without meeting the requirements of 10 CFR 55.31(a)(5).  
Pursuant to 10 CFR 55.31(a)(5) operator license applicants are required to  
perform at least five significant control manipulations which affect  
reactivity or power level on the facility for which the license is sought.

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

Sincerely,  
/S/

John F. Stolz, Director  
Project Directorate I-2  
Division of Reactor Projects - I/II  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket Nos. 50-272/311

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, reading "John F. Stolz", is written over the typed name and title.

John F. Stolz, Director  
Project Directorate I-2  
Division of Reactor Projects - I/II  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket Nos. 50-272/311

Enclosure: Environmental Assessment

cc w/encl: See next page

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UNITED STATES NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION  
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PECO ENERGY COMPANY  
DELMARVA POWER AND LIGHT COMPANY  
ATLANTIC CITY ELECTRIC COMPANY  
DOCKET NOS. 50-272 AND 50-311  
SALEM NUCLEAR GENERATING 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 an exemption from the requirement of 10 CFR 55.31(a)(5) to Public Service Electric and Gas Company, et al. (PSE&G, the licensee), for operation of the Salem Nuclear Generating Station, Units 1 and 2, located in Salem County, New Jersey.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Identification of the Proposed Action:

The proposed action would grant an exemption from the requirement of 10 CFR 55.31(a)(5) which requires each licensed operator applicant to perform at least five significant control manipulations which affect reactivity or power level on the facility for which the license is sought.

The licensee has requested the NRC accept the performance of the required control manipulations by each licensed operator applicant on its certified, plant-referenced simulator.

The proposed action is in accordance with the licensee's application for an exemption dated May 10, 1996, as supplemented by letters dated June 20, 1996, and July 9, 1996.

The Need for the Proposed Action:

The proposed action would allow issuance of six senior operator licenses to the applicants with previous licensed senior operator experience prior to their performance of the required control manipulations. Performance of the control manipulations on the Salem facility has not been possible since both Units 1 and 2 have been shutdown for approximately one year for extensive upgrades of both equipment and personnel. In lieu of performing the control manipulations on its facility, the licensee requests acceptance of satisfactory performance of simulated control manipulations on its certified, plant-referenced simulator since all six of the applicants have significant and extensive commercial nuclear power plant experience. The licensee further committed to the performance of the required control manipulations by each of the six applicants on the Salem Nuclear Generating Station, Unit 2, prior to or at the time the unit achieves 100 percent power following the current plant outage. The requested relief would constitute a one-time exemption from the requirements of 10 CFR 55.31(a)(5).

In support of its request for exemption, the licensee stated that the six senior operator applicants have significant commercial nuclear power plant experience - from 5 to 22 years - and have received additional training on the Salem certified, plant-referenced simulator, including the performance of simulated control manipulations beyond the number required by 10 CFR 55.31(a)(5). The licensee stated that the six senior operator applicants conducted control manipulations at other pressurized water reactors. These six applicants have also performed licensed senior operator duties within approximately the last 2 years. Finally, the licensee asserts that the six

applicants have the specific leadership characteristics, determined through a rigorous screening and interview process, considered vital for reliable shift performance. The licensee further stated that failure to grant the exemption would not serve an underlying purpose of the rule in that the safety of nuclear power plant operations would not be improved.

The licensee concludes that the proposed alternate qualifications and training will suffice due to the previously demonstrated capabilities of the senior operator applicants, and it is in the public interest to grant the exemption since inclusion of these individuals on the operations staff will facilitate an increased level of safety as part of the Salem Restart Action Plan.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action:

The Commission has completed its evaluation of the proposed action and concludes that the underlying purpose of 10 CFR 55.31(a)(5), to ensure that applicants for operator and senior operator licenses have some minimum level of actual on-the-job training and experience manipulating the controls in the power plant control room prior to license issuance will be met for the six senior operator license applicants by the additional plant-specific simulator training. The six previously licensed applicants possess recent significant licensed operating experience at other pressurized water reactors and have successfully conducted actual control manipulations. They have demonstrated that they possess the required levels of practical skills and abilities needed to safely operate the plant. Based on their considerable licensed operating experience and the additional training provided on the certified, plant-referenced simulator, the lack of manipulations at the actual controls of the

Salem facility is not considered significant. Furthermore, the six applicants will complete the manipulations prior to or at the time that Unit 2 achieves 100% power following the current outage. Therefore, the NRC staff has concluded that the licensee's proposed use of simulated control manipulations for these six senior operator applicants, combined with their prior experience, meets the intent of the requirement to have actual experience manipulating the controls in the power plant control room prior to licensing. Meeting the requirement for the completion of the control manipulations on the actual plant for these six senior operator applicants would significantly delay issuance of senior operator licenses for these operators, with a resultant adverse effect on the facility licensee's operating crew experience level without a net benefit to safety, and would otherwise have a detrimental effect on the public interest. This one-time exemption will allow additional experienced licensed senior operator support during the upcoming Salem Unit 2 restart, which will provide a safety enhancement during plant startup operations and testing.

The proposed action 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 non-radiological impacts, the proposed action involves 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 the Salem Nuclear Generating Station, Units 1 and 2, dated April 1973.

Agencies and Persons Consulted:

In accordance with its stated policy, on July 8, 1996, the staff consulted with the New Jersey State official, Dennis Zannoni of the Department of Environmental Protection regarding the environmental impact of the proposed action. The State official had no comments.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

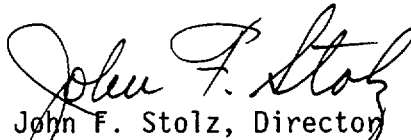
Based upon the environmental assessment, the Commission concludes that the proposed action will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment. Accordingly, the Commission has determined not to prepare an environmental impact statement for the proposed action.



For further details with respect to the proposed action, see the licensee's application for an exemption dated May 10, 1996, as supplemented by letters dated June 20, 1996, and July 9, 1996, 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 Salem Free Public Library, 112 West Broadway, Salem, NJ 08079.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 26th day of July 1996.

FOR THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "John F. Stolz".

John F. Stolz, Director  
Project Directorate 12  
Division of Reactor Projects - I/II  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation