

July 11, 2001

Mr. J. A. Scalice
Chief Nuclear Officer and
Executive Vice President
Tennessee Valley Authority
6A Lookout Place
1101 Market Street
Chattanooga, TN 37402-2801

SUBJECT: SEQUOYAH NUCLEAR PLANT, UNITS 1 AND 2 - NOTICE OF CONSIDERATION
OF ISSUANCE OF AMENDMENT (TAC NOS. MB2197 AND MB2198)

Dear Mr. Scalice:

The Commission has forwarded a "Notice of Consideration of Issuance of Amendment to Facility Operating License, Proposed No Significant Hazards Consideration Determination, and Opportunity for Hearing" to the Office of the Federal Register for publication. A copy is enclosed for your information.

The notice relates to your application dated July 10, 2001, to amend the Sequoyah Nuclear Plant, Units 1 and 2 Technical Specification 3.7.5.c to allow an increase in the average essential raw cooling water supply header temperature from 84.5°F to 87°F until September 30, 2002.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Ronald W. Hernan, Sr. Project Manager, Section 2
Project Directorate II
Division of Licensing Project Management
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket Nos. 50-327 and 50-328

Enclosure: Notice

cc w/encl: See next page

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UNITED STATES NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

SEQUOYAH NUCLEAR PLANT, UNITS 1 AND 2

DOCKET NOS. 50-327 AND 50-328

NOTICE OF CONSIDERATION OF ISSUANCE OF AMENDMENT TO
FACILITY OPERATING LICENSE, PROPOSED NO SIGNIFICANT HAZARDS
CONSIDERATION DETERMINATION, AND OPPORTUNITY FOR A HEARING

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) is considering issuance of an amendment to Facility Operating License Nos. DPR-77 and DPR-79, issued to the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA or the licensee), for operation of the Sequoyah Nuclear Plant (SQN), Units 1 and 2, located in Soddy-Daisy, Tennessee.

The proposed amendments would change Technical Specification (TS) 3.7.5.c to allow an increase in the average essential raw cooling water (ERCW) supply header temperature from 84.5°F to 87°F until September 30, 2002.

The circumstance that makes this amendment necessary, strictly as a contingency measure, is significant increases in the average water temperature of the Tennessee River (Chickamauga Reservoir), which serves as the ultimate heat sink for the SQN, Units 1 and 2. This temperature, as measured at SQN's ERCW header, has increased as the result of drought-induced low flow conditions and is expected to closely approach the current TS limit of 84.5°F, which applies when the Chickamauga Reservoir water level is above elevation 680 feet mean sea level. This change to the TS would be temporary, pending additional heat load analyses by TVA to justify the higher temperature limit on a permanent basis.

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

The Commission has made a proposed determination that the amendment request involves no significant hazards consideration. Under the Commission's regulations in 10 CFR 50.92, this means that operation of the facility in accordance with the proposed amendment would not (1) involve a significant increase in the probability or consequences of an accident previously evaluated; or (2) create the possibility of a new or different kind of accident from any accident previously evaluated; or (3) involve a significant reduction in a margin of safety. As required by 10 CFR 50.91(a), the licensee has provided its analysis of the issue of no significant hazards consideration, which is presented below:

- A. The proposed amendment does not involve a significant increase in the probability or consequences of an accident previously evaluated.

The probability of occurrence or the consequences of an accident are not increased as presently analyzed in the safety analysis since the objective of the event mitigation is not changed. No changes in event classification as discussed in Final Safety Analysis Report Chapter 15 will occur due to the increased river water temperature (with respect to both containment integrity and safety-system heat removal). Therefore, the probability of an accident or malfunction of equipment presently evaluated in the safety analyses will not be increased. The containment design pressure is not challenged by allowing an increase in the river water temperature above that allowed by the TS, thereby ensuring that the potential for increasing offsite dose limits above those presently analyzed at the containment design pressure of 12.0 pounds per square inch is not a concern. In addition, SQN's essential raw cooling water (ERCW) and component cooling system (CCS) piping, pipe supports remain qualified to the design basis and code allowables. Therefore, the proposed variance to TS 3.7.5.c will not significantly increase the probability or consequences of an accident previously evaluated.

The proposed amendment does not create the possibility of a new or different kind of accident from any accident previously evaluated.

The possibility of a new or different accident situation occurring as a result of this condition is not created. The ERCW system is not an initiator of any accident and only serves as a heat sink for normal and upset plant conditions. By allowing this change in operating temperatures, only the assumptions in the containment pressure analysis are changed. The variance in the ERCW temperature results in minimal increase in peak containment accident pressure. As for the net positive suction head requirements relative to the essential core cooling system

and containment spray system, it has been demonstrated that this operational variance will not challenge the present design requirements. In addition, increased river temperatures will not significantly affect the design basis analysis of ERCW or CCS piping, pipe supports, and components. Therefore, the potential for creating a new or unanalyzed condition is not created.

- C. The proposed amendment does not involve a significant reduction in a margin of safety.

The margin of safety as reported in the basis for the TS is also not reduced. The design pressure for the containment and all supporting equipment and components for worse-case accident condition is 12.0 pounds per square inch gauge (psig). This variance in river water temperature will not challenge the design condition of containment. Further, 12.0 psig design limit is not the failure point of containment, which would lead to the loss of containment integrity. In addition, analysis of the margins associated with ERCW and CCS piping, pipe supports, and components indicate these remain enveloped by the proposed increase in river temperature. Therefore, a significant reduction in the margin to safety is not created by this variance.

The NRC staff has reviewed the licensee's analysis and, based on this review, it appears that the three standards of 10 CFR 50.92(c) are satisfied. Therefore, the NRC staff proposes to determine that the amendment request involves no significant hazards consideration.

The Commission is seeking public comments on this proposed determination. Any comments received within 30 days after the date of publication of this notice will be considered in making any final determination.

Normally, the Commission will not issue the amendment until the expiration of the 30-day notice period. However, should circumstances change during the notice period, such that failure to act in a timely way would result, for example, in derating or shutdown of the facility, the Commission may issue the license amendment before the expiration of the 30-day notice period, provided that its final determination is that the amendment involves no significant hazards consideration. The final determination will consider all public and State comments received. Should the Commission take this action, it will publish in the FEDERAL REGISTER a

notice of issuance. The Commission expects that the need to take this action will occur very infrequently.

Written comments may be submitted by mail to the Chief, Rules and Directives Branch, Division of Administrative Services, Office of Administration, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001, and should cite the publication date and page number of this FEDERAL REGISTER notice. Written comments may also be delivered to Room 6D59, Two White Flint North, 11545 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland, from 7:30 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. Federal workdays. Copies of written comments received may be examined at the NRC Public Document Room, located at One White Flint North, 11555 Rockville Pike (first floor), Rockville, Maryland.

The filing of requests for hearing and petitions for leave to intervene is discussed below.

By August 16, 2001, the licensee may file a request for a hearing with respect to issuance of the amendment to the subject facility operating license and any person whose interest may be affected by this proceeding and who wishes to participate as a party in the proceeding must file a written request for a hearing and a petition for leave to intervene. Requests for a hearing and a petition for leave to intervene shall be filed in accordance with the Commission's "Rules of Practice for Domestic Licensing Proceedings" in 10 CFR Part 2. Interested persons should consult a current copy of 10 CFR 2.714 which is available at the Commission's Public Document Room, located at One White Flint North, 11555 Rockville Pike (first floor), Rockville, Maryland, or electronically on the Internet at the NRC Web site <http://www.nrc.gov/NRC/CFR/index.html>. If there are problems in accessing the document, contact the Public Document Room Reference staff at 1-800-397-4209, 301-415-4737, or by e-mail to pdr@nrc.gov. If a request for a hearing or petition for leave to intervene is filed by the above date, the Commission or an Atomic Safety and Licensing Board, designated by the Commission or by the Chairman of the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board

Panel, will rule on the request and/or petition; and the Secretary or the designated Atomic Safety and Licensing Board will issue a notice of hearing or an appropriate order.

As required by 10 CFR 2.714, a petition for leave to intervene shall set forth with particularity the interest of the petitioner in the proceeding, and how that interest may be affected by the results of the proceeding. The petition should specifically explain the reasons why intervention should be permitted with particular reference to the following factors: (1) the nature of the petitioner's right under the Act to be made a party to the proceeding; (2) the nature and extent of the petitioner's property, financial, or other interest in the proceeding; and (3) the possible effect of any order which may be entered in the proceeding on the petitioner's interest. The petition should also identify the specific aspect(s) of the subject matter of the proceeding as to which petitioner wishes to intervene. Any person who has filed a petition for leave to intervene or who has been admitted as a party may amend the petition without requesting leave of the Board up to 15 days prior to the first prehearing conference scheduled in the proceeding, but such an amended petition must satisfy the specificity requirements described above.

Not later than 15 days prior to the first prehearing conference scheduled in the proceeding, a petitioner shall file a supplement to the petition to intervene which must include a list of the contentions which are sought to be litigated in the matter. Each contention must consist of a specific statement of the issue of law or fact to be raised or controverted. In addition, the petitioner shall provide a brief explanation of the bases of the contention and a concise statement of the alleged facts or expert opinion which support the contention and on which the petitioner intends to rely in proving the contention at the hearing. The petitioner must also provide references to those specific sources and documents of which the petitioner is aware and on which the petitioner intends to rely to establish those facts or expert opinion. Petitioner must provide sufficient information to show that a genuine dispute exists

with the applicant on a material issue of law or fact. Contentions shall be limited to matters within the scope of the amendment under consideration. The contention must be one which, if proven, would entitle the petitioner to relief. A petitioner who fails to file such a supplement which satisfies these requirements with respect to at least one contention will not be permitted to participate as a party.

Those permitted to intervene become parties to the proceeding, subject to any limitations in the order granting leave to intervene, and have the opportunity to participate fully in the conduct of the hearing, including the opportunity to present evidence and cross-examine witnesses.

If a hearing is requested, the Commission will make a final determination on the issue of no significant hazards consideration. The final determination will serve to decide when the hearing is held.

If the final determination is that the amendment request involves no significant hazards consideration, the Commission may issue the amendment and make it immediately effective, notwithstanding the request for a hearing. Any hearing held would take place after issuance of the amendment.

If the final determination is that the amendment request involves a significant hazards consideration, any hearing held would take place before the issuance of any amendment.

A request for a hearing or a petition for leave to intervene must be filed with the Secretary of the Commission, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001, Attention: Rulemakings and Adjudications Staff, or may be delivered to the Commission's Public Document Room, located at One White Flint North, 11555 Rockville Pike (first floor), Rockville, Maryland, by the above date. A copy of the petition should also be sent to the Office of the General Counsel, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC

20555-0001, and to General Council, Tennessee Valley Authority, ET 11H, 400 West Summit Hill Drive, Knoxville, attorney for the licensee.

Nontimely filings of petitions for leave to intervene, amended petitions, supplemental petitions and/or requests for hearing will not be entertained absent a determination by the Commission, the presiding officer or the presiding Atomic Safety and Licensing Board that the petition and/or request should be granted based upon a balancing of the factors specified in 10 CFR 2.714(a)(1)(i)-(v) and 2.714(d).

For further details with respect to this action, see the application for amendment dated July 10, 2001, which is available for public inspection at the Commission's Public Document Room, located at One White Flint North, 11555 Rockville Pike (first floor), Rockville, Maryland. Publicly available records will be accessible from the Agencywide Documents Access and Management Systems (ADAMS) Public Electronic Reading Room on the Internet at the NRC Web site, <http://www.nrc.gov/NRC/ADAMS/index.html>. If you do not have access to ADAMS or if there are problems in accessing the documents located in ADAMS, contact the NRC Public Document Room Reference staff at 1-800-397-4209, 301-415-4737 or by e-mail to pdr@nrc.gov.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 11th day of July 2001.

FOR THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

/RA/

Ronald W. Hernan, Senior Project Manager, Section 2
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SEQUOYAH NUCLEAR PLANT

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