

October 16, 1989

Docket Nos. 50-269
50-270
50-287

Mr. H. B. Tucker, Vice President
Nuclear Production Department
Duke Power Company
422 South Church Street
Charlotte, North Carolina 28242

Dear Mr. Tucker:

SUBJECT: OCONEE UNITS 1, 2 AND 3 - ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT REGARDING AN INDEPENDENT SPENT FUEL STORAGE INSTALLATION AT OCONEE NUCLEAR STATION (TACS 68026,68027,68028)

Enclosed for your information is a copy of an "Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact" related to your application for amendment dated March 31, 1988, regarding the installation of an independent spent fuel storage facility at Oconee Units 1, 2 and 3.

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

Sincerely,

Original signed by:

Leonard A. Wiens, Project Manager
Project Directorate II-3
Division of Reactor Projects - I/II
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Enclosure:
As stated

cc w/enc1:
See next page

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UNITED STATES NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSIONDUKE POWER COMPANYDOCKET NO. 50-269, 50-270 AND 50-287ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND FINDING OFNO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) is considering issuance of amendments to Facility Operating License Nos. DPR-38, DPR-47, and DPR-55 issued to Duke Power Company (the licensee) for operation of the Oconee Nuclear Station, Units 1, 2 and 3, located in Oconee County, South Carolina.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENTIdentification of Proposed Action:

The proposed amendments would revise the provisions in the Technical Specifications (TS) to allow handling of a spent fuel transfer cask in the spent fuel pool and to allow storage of spent fuel in an Independent Spent Fuel Storage Installation (ISFSI).

The proposed action is in accordance with the licensee's application for amendments dated March 31, 1988.

The Need for The Proposed Action:

The proposed changes to the TS are required to permit the licensee to operate an ISFSI that it is constructing at the Oconee Nuclear Station. The ISFSI is necessary in order to maintain a prudent operating reserve spent fuel storage capacity and to maintain the ability to off-load an entire reactor core. The ISFSI would allow this capacity until a permanent disposal facility is available.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action:

The Commission has completed its evaluation of the proposed revisions to the TS. The proposed revisions would allow handling of a spent fuel transfer cask in the spent fuel pool after specified conditions in the pool were met. In addition, the ISFSI would be added as an authorized storage location for spent fuel. While the spent fuel transfer cask is larger and heavier than the currently approved spent fuel shipping casks for Oconee, the licensee has performed calculations which show that, by imposing more restrictive limits on the decay time for the spent fuel in the respective Oconee spent fuel pool, offsite dose release resulting from a cask drop in the spent fuel pool are well within the 10 CFR Part 100 limits. These new restrictions would require, for Oconee Units 1 and 2 spent fuel pool, spent fuel stored in the first 64 rows of the storage racks closest to the cask handling area to have decayed for a minimum of 65 days prior to transfer cask operations. For Oconee Unit 3 spent fuel pool, all of the spent fuel in the pool must have decayed a minimum of 57 days prior to transfer cask operations. The current TS require, for Oconee Units 1 and 2, that spent fuel in the first 36 rows closest to the shipping cask handling area be decayed a minimum of 55 days, and for Unit 3, spent fuel stored in the first 33 rows closest to the shipping cask handling area be decayed a minimum of 70 days. The staff has reviewed and concurs in the licensee's calculations. Accordingly, the Commission concludes that this proposed action would result in no significant radiological environmental impact.

With regard to potential nonradiological impacts, the proposed amendment 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. Therefore, the Commission concludes that there are no significant nonradiological environmental impacts associated with the proposed amendments.

An Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact for the construction and operation of the Oconee ISFSI was previously published in the FEDERAL REGISTER on November 1, 1988 (53 FR 44133). This Environmental Assessment covers all aspects of ISFSI construction and operation occurring outside the Oconee reactor building.

Alternative to the Proposed Action:

Since the Commission concluded that there are no significant environmental effects that would result from the proposed action, any alternatives with equal or greater environmental impacts need not be evaluated.

The principal alternative would be to deny the requested amendments. This would not reduce environmental impacts of plant operation and would prevent implementation of the ISFSI, eventually resulting in insufficient spent fuel storage reserve to allow uninterrupted operation of Oconee Units 1, 2 and 3.

Alternative Use of Resources:

This action does not involve the use of any resources not previously considered in the Final Environmental Statement related to the Operation of Oconee Nuclear Station, Units 1, 2 and 3, dated March 1972.

Agencies and Persons Consulted:

The NRC staff reviewed the licensee's request and did not consult other agencies or persons.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

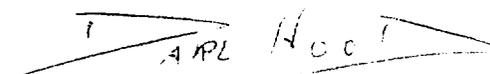
The Commission has determined not to prepare an environmental impact statement for the proposed license amendments.

Based upon the foregoing environmental assessment, we conclude that the proposed action will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment.

For further details with respect to this action, see the application for amendment dated March 31, 1988, which is available for public inspection at the Commission's Public Document Room, 2120 L Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20555, and at the Oconee County Library, 501 West South Broad Street, Walhalla, South Carolina 29691.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 10th day of October 1989.

FOR THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Darl S. Hood". The signature is written over a horizontal line.

Darl S. Hood, Acting Director
Project Directorate II-3
Division of Reactor Projects I/II
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

