

April 3, 1997

Mr. M. S. Tuckman
Senior Vice President
Nuclear Generation
Duke Power Company
P. O. Box 1006
Charlotte, NC 28201

SUBJECT: ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT FOR
EXEMPTION FROM CERTAIN REQUIREMENTS OF 10 CFR 73.55 FOR OCONEE
NUCLEAR STATION, UNITS 1, 2, AND 3; CATAWBA NUCLEAR STATION, UNITS 1
AND 2; AND MCGUIRE NUCLEAR STATION, UNITS 1 AND 2 (TAC NOS. M96418,
M96419, M96420, M96421, M96422, M96423 AND M96424)

Dear Mr. Tuckman:

Enclosed is a copy of the "Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact" related to your application dated August 23, 1996, for exemption from certain requirements of 10 CFR 73.55, "Requirements for Physical Protection of Licensed Activities in Nuclear Reactors Against Radiological Sabotage." Specifically, the exemption is from the requirements of Section 73.55(d)(5), which states that an individual not employed by the licensee but who requires frequent and extended access to protected and vital areas, may be authorized access to these areas without escort provided the individual receives a picture badge upon entrance into the protected area that must be returned upon exit from the protected area. The proposed exemption would allow implementation of a hand geometry biometrics system for site access control at the Oconee, Catawba, and McGuire nuclear stations so that photo identification badges may be kept and taken offsite by individuals not employed by the licensee.

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

Sincerely,

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY:

Herbert N. Berkow, Director
Project Directorate II-2
Division of Reactor Projects - I/II
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket Nos. 50-269, 50-270, 50-287, 50-369,
50-370, 50-413 and 50-414

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 dark ink, reading "Herbert N. Berkow", is written over the typed name.

Herbert N. Berkow, Director
Project Directorate II-2
Division of Reactor Projects - I/II
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket Nos. 50-269, 50-270, 50-287, 50-369,
50-370, 50-413 and 50-414

Enclosure: Environmental Assessment

cc w/encl: See next page

Catawba Nuclear Station
McGuire Nuclear Station
Oconee Nuclear Station

cc:

Dr. John M. Barry
Mecklenburg County
Department of Environmental
Protection
700 N Tryon Street
Charlotte, North Carolina 29202

County Manager of Mecklenburg County
720 East Fourth Street
Charlotte, North Carolina 28202

Mr. Michael T. Cash
Regulatory Compliance Manager
Duke Power Company
McGuire Nuclear Site
12700 Hagers Ferry Road
Huntersville, North Carolina 28078

Senior Resident Inspector
c/o U.S. Nuclear Regulatory
Commission
12700 Hagers Ferry Road
Huntersville, North Carolina 28078

Mr. Dayne H. Brown, Director
Division of Radiation Protection
North Carolina Department of
Environmental Health and Natural
Resources
P. O. Box 27687
Raleigh, North Carolina 27611

County Supervisor of Oconee County
Walhalla, South Carolina 27621

Elaine Wathen, Lead REP Planner
Division of Emergency Management
116 West Jones Street
Raleigh, North Carolina 27603-1335

Mr. T. Richard Puryear
Owners Group (NCEMC)
Duke Power Company
4800 Concord Road
York, South Carolina 29745

Mr. Ed Burchfield
Compliance
Duke Power Company
Oconee Nuclear Site
P. O. Box 1439
Seneca, South Carolina 29679

Mr. Robert B. Borsum
Framatome Technologies
Suite 525
1700 Rockville Pike
Rockville, Maryland 20852

Manager, LIS
NUS Corporation
2650 McCormick Drive, 3rd Floor
Clearwater, Florida 34619-1035

Senior Resident Inspector
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Route 2, Box 610
Seneca, South Carolina 29678

Mr. W. R. McCollum
Site Vice President
Catawba Nuclear Station
Duke Power Company
4800 Concord Road
York, South Carolina 29745

Mr. H. B. Barron
Vice President, McGuire Site
Duke Power Company
12700 Hagers Ferry Road
Huntersville, North Carolina 28078

Mr. J. W. Hampton
Vice President, Oconee Site
Duke Power Company
P. O. Box 1439
Seneca, South Carolina 29679

North Carolina Electric Membership
Corporation
P. O. Box 27306
Raleigh, North Carolina 27611

Catawba Nuclear Station
McGuire Nuclear Station
Oconee Nuclear Station

cc:

Mr. M. S. Kitlan
Regulatory Compliance Manager
Duke Power Company
4800 Concord Road
York, South Carolina 29745

Mr. Paul R. Newton
Legal Department (PB05E)
Duke Power Company
422 South Church Street
Charlotte, North Carolina 28242

J. Michael McGarry, III, Esquire
Winston and Strawn
1400 L Street, NW.
Washington, DC 20005

North Carolina Municipal Power
Agency Number 1
1427 Meadowood Boulevard
P. O. Box 29513
Raleigh, North Carolina 27626

Mr. Peter R. Harden, IV
Account Sales Manager
Westinghouse Electric Corporation
Power Systems Field Sales
P. O. Box 7288
Charlotte, North Carolina 28241

County Manager of York County
York County Courthouse
York, South Carolina 29745

Richard P. Wilson, Esquire
Assistant Attorney General
S.C. Attorney General's Office
P. O. Box 11549
Columbia, South Carolina 29211

Piedmont Municipal Power Agency
121 Village Drive
Greer, South Carolina 29651

Saluda River Electric Cooperative,
Inc.
P. O. Box 929
Laurens, South Carolina 29360

Senior Resident Inspector
4830 Concord Road
York, South Carolina 29745

Regional Administrator, Region II
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
101 Marietta Street, NW Suite 2900
Atlanta, Georgia 30323

Max Batavia, Chief
Bureau of Radiological Health
South Carolina Department of Health
and Environmental Control
2600 Bull Street
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

Ms. Karen E. Long
Assistant Attorney General
North Carolina Department of Justice
P. O. Box 629
Raleigh, North Carolina 27602

Mr. G. A. Copp
Licensing - EC050
Duke Power Company
526 South Church Street
Charlotte, North Carolina 28242-0001

UNITED STATES NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSIONOCONEE NUCLEAR STATION, UNITS 1, 2, AND 3DOCKET NOS. 50-269, 50-270, AND 50-287CATAWBA NUCLEAR STATION, UNITS 1 AND 2DOCKET NOS. 50-369 AND 50-370MCGUIRE NUCLEAR STATION, UNITS 1 AND 2DOCKET NOS. 50-413 AND 50-414ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT ANDFINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) is considering issuance of an exemption from certain requirements of its regulations in Facility Operating Licenses issued to Duke Power Company, et al. (the licensee). License Nos. DPR-38, DPR-47, and DPR-55 are for operation of the Oconee Nuclear Station, Units 1, 2, and 3, located in Oconee County, South Carolina. License Nos. NPF-35 and NPF-52 are for operation of the Catawba Nuclear Station located in York County, South Carolina. License Nos. NPF-9 and NPF-17 are for operation of the McGuire Nuclear Station located in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENTIdentification of Proposed Action:

The proposed action is in accordance with the licensee's application dated August 23, 1996, for exemption from certain requirements of 10 CFR 73.55, "Requirements for Physical Protection of Licensed Activities in Nuclear Power Reactors Against Radiological Sabotage." The exemption would allow implementation of a hand geometry biometrics system to control site access at

the Oconee, Catawba, and McGuire nuclear stations so that photo identification badges may be kept and taken offsite by individuals not employed by the licensee who have been granted unescorted access into protected and vital areas.

The Need for the Proposed Action:

Pursuant to 10 CFR 73.55, paragraph (a), Duke Power Company shall establish and maintain an onsite physical protection system and security organization. Regulation 10 CFR 73.55(d), "Access Requirements," paragraph (1), specifies that the "licensee shall control all points of personnel and vehicle access into a protected area." Regulation 10 CFR 73.55(d)(5) specifies that, "A numbered picture badge identification system shall be used for all individuals who are authorized access to protected areas without escort."

Regulation 10 CFR 73.55(d)(5) also states that an individual not employed by the licensee (i.e., contractors) may be authorized access to protected areas without escort provided the individual "receives a picture badge upon entrance into the protected area which must be returned upon exit from the protected area...." Currently, unescorted access into protected areas at the Oconee, Catawba, and McGuire nuclear stations is controlled through the use of a photograph on a badge/keycard (hereafter referred to as a "badge"), which is stored at the access point when not in use. The security officers at each entrance station use the photograph on the badge to visually identify the individual requesting access. The badges for licensee employees and contractor personnel who have been granted unescorted access are given to the individuals at the entrance location upon entry and are returned upon exit.

In accordance with 10 CFR 73.55(d)(5), contractor badges are not allowed to be taken offsite.

The licensee proposes to implement an alternate unescorted access control system that would eliminate the need to issue and retrieve badges at the entry point and would allow all individuals with unescorted access to keep their badges when departing the site.

An exemption from 10 CFR 73.55(d)(5) is required to permit contractors to take their badges offsite instead of returning them when exiting the site.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action:

The Commission has completed its evaluation of the licensee's application. Under the proposed system, each individual who is authorized unescorted access would have the physical characteristics of his/her hand (i.e., hand geometry) registered with his/her badge number in the access control system. When an individual enters the badge into the card reader and places his/her hand on the measuring surface, the system would record the individual's hand image. The unique characteristics of the hand image would be compared with the previously stored template to verify authorization for entry. Individuals, including licensee employees and contractors, would be allowed to keep their badges when departing the site.

A Sandia report, "A Performance Evaluation of Biometric Identification Devices," SAND91-0276-UC-906, Unlimited Release, June 1991, concluded that hand geometry equipment possesses strong performance and high detection characteristics. Also, based on its own experience with the current photo-identification system, the licensee determined that the proposed hand geometry system would provide the same level of assurance as the current system that

access is only granted to authorized individuals. Since both the badge and hand geometry would be necessary for access into the protected areas, the proposed system would provide a positive verification process. Potential loss of a badge by an individual, as a result of taking the badge offsite, would not enable unauthorized entry into protected areas. The licensee has determined that the proposed hand geometry access control process for identifying personnel will provide the same high assurance objective regarding onsite physical protection as provided by the photo-identification process now in use. The access process will continue to be under the observation of security personnel. A numbered picture badge identification system will continue to be used for all individuals who are authorized access to protected areas without escorts. Badges will continue to be displayed by all individuals while inside the protected areas.

The licensee has stated it will implement a process for periodically testing the proposed system to ensure continued overall level of performance equivalent to that specified in the regulation. The Physical Security Plan will be revised to include implementation and testing of the hand geometry access control system and to allow licensee employees and contractors to take their badges offsite.

Accordingly, the Commission concludes that this proposed action would result in no significant radiological environmental impacts. With regard to potential nonradiological impacts, the proposed action does not affect non-radiological plant effluents and has no other environmental impact. Therefore, the Commission concludes that there are no significant nonradiological environmental impacts associated with the proposed action.

Alternative to the Proposed Action:

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 did not involve the use of any resources not previously considered in the Final Environmental Statements related to operation of the Oconee, Catawba, and McGuire nuclear stations.

Agencies and Persons Consulted:

In accordance with its stated policy, on April 1 and April 4, 1997, the staff consulted with the South Carolina and North Carolina State officials, respectively, regarding the environmental impact of the proposed action. The State officials had no comments.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

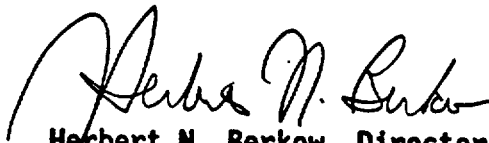
The Commission has determined not to prepare an environmental impact statement for the proposed exemption. Based upon the foregoing environmental assessment, the Commission has concluded that the proposed action will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment.

For further details with respect to this action, see the request for exemption dated August 23, 1996, which is 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 rooms located at the Oconee County Library, 501 West South Broad Street, Walhalla, South Carolina for the Oconee Nuclear Station; the York County Library, 138 East Black Street,

Rock Hill, South Carolina 29730 for the Catawba Nuclear Station; and the J. Murrey Atkins Library, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, 9201 University City Boulevard, North Carolina 28223 for the McGuire Nuclear Station.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 3rd day of April 1997.

FOR THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Herbert N. Berkow". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Herbert" being the most prominent part.

Herbert N. Berkow, Director
Project Directorate II-2
Division of Reactor Projects - I/II
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation