

August 16, 1995

Mr. Gary J. Taylor
Vice President, Nuclear Operations
South Carolina Electric and Gas Company
Virgil C. Summer Nuclear Station
Post Office Box 88
Jenkinsville, South Carolina 29065

SUBJECT: ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT OF REQUEST FOR EXEMPTION FROM CERTAIN REQUIREMENTS OF 10 CFR 73.55, REQUIREMENTS FOR PHYSICAL PROTECTION OF LICENSED ACTIVITIES IN NUCLEAR POWER PLANT REACTORS AGAINST RADIOLOGICAL SABOTAGE - VIRGIL C. SUMMER NUCLEAR STATION, UNIT 1 (TAC NO. M92771)

Dear Mr. Taylor:

Enclosed is a copy of the Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact related to your application for exemption dated June 28, 1995. The proposed exemption would enable you to implement a biometrics access control system at the Summer site.

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

Sincerely,

Original signed by

Stephen Dembek, Project Manager
Project Directorate II-3
Division of Reactor Projects - I/II
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket No. 50-395

Enclosure: Environmental Assessment

cc w/enclosure: See next page

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UNITED STATES NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

SOUTH CAROLINA ELECTRIC AND GAS COMPANY

DOCKET NO. 50-395

VIRGIL C. SUMMER NUCLEAR STATION, UNIT 1

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND FINDING OF

NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) is considering issuance of an exemption from certain requirements of its regulations for Facility Operating License No. NPF-12, issued to South Carolina Electric and Gas Company (the licensee), for operation of the Virgil C. Summer Nuclear Station (VCSNS), Unit 1, located in Fairfield County, South Carolina.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Identification of the Proposed Action:

The proposed action would allow implementation of a hand geometry biometric system of site access control such that photograph identification badges can be taken offsite.

The proposed action is in accordance with the licensee's application dated June 28, 1995, for exemption from certain requirements of 10 CFR 73.55, "Requirements for physical protection of licensed activities in nuclear power plant reactors against radiological sabotage."

The Need for the Proposed Action:

Pursuant to 10 CFR 73.55, paragraph (a), the licensee shall establish and maintain an onsite physical protection system and security organization.

Paragraph (1) of 10 CFR 73.55(d), "Access Requirements," specifies that "The licensee shall control all points of personnel and vehicle access into a protected area...." It is specified in 10 CFR 73.55(d)(5) that "A numbered picture badge identification system shall be used for all individuals who are authorized access to protected areas without escort." It 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 of the VCSNS is controlled through the use of a photograph on a badge/keycard (hereafter, these are referred to as badges). The security officers at the entrance station use the badge number, name and photograph on the badge to identify the individual requesting access. Under the current system, badges are not taken offsite and are issued, stored, and retrieved at the entrance/exit location. In accordance with 10 CFR 73.55(d)(5), contractor individuals are not allowed to take badges offsite. In accordance with the plant's procedures, neither licensee employees nor contractors are currently allowed to take badges offsite.

The licensee proposes to implement alternative unescorted access control system which would eliminate the need to issue and retrieve badges at the entrance/exit location and would allow all individuals with unescorted access to keep their badges with them 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.

The Commission has completed its evaluation of the proposed action. Under the proposed system, each individual who is authorized for unescorted entry into protected areas would have the physical characteristics of their hand (hand geometry) registered with their badge number in the access control system. When an individual enters the badge into the card reader and places the hand on the measuring surface, the system would record the individual's hand image. The unique characteristics of the extracted 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 badge with them when they depart the site.

Based on a Sandia National Laboratories report titled "A Performance Evaluation of Biometric Identification Devices," (SAND91--0276 UC--906 Unlimited Release, Printed June 1991), and on its experience with the current photo-identification system, the licensee stated that the false acceptance rate of the proposed hand geometry system is at least equal to that of the current system. The licensee stated that the use of the badges with hand geometry system would enhance access control capabilities at the protected area perimeter, reduce security force staffing requirements, and improve the emergency accountability process. Since both the badge and hand geometry would be necessary for access into the protected area, the proposed system would provide for a positive verification process.

Potential loss of a badge by an individual, as a result of taking the badge offsite, would not enable an unauthorized entry into protected areas. The licensee will implement a process for 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.

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 area.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action:

The change will not increase the probability or consequences of accidents, no changes are being made in the types of any effluent 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 action involves features located entirely within the restricted area as defined in 10 CFR Part 20. It does not affect nonradiological plant effluent 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 VCSNS.

Agencies and Persons Consulted:

In accordance with its stated policy, on July 31, 1995, the staff consulted with the South Carolina State official, Mr. Virgil Autry of the Bureau of Solid and Hazardous Waste Management, Department of Health and Environmental Control, 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 letter dated June 28, 1995, 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 room located at the Fairfield County Library, 300 Washington Street, Winnsboro, SC.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 16th day of August 1995.

FOR THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION



Frederick J. Hebdon, Director
Project Directorate II-3
Division of Reactor Projects - I/II
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

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South Carolina Electric & Gas Company

VIRGIL C. SUMMER NUCLEAR STATION

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