

Mr. C. K. McCoy
 Vice President - Nuclear
 Vogtle Project
 Georgia Power Company
 P. O. Box 1295
 Birmingham, AL 35201

June 5, 1995

SUBJECT: EXEMPTION FROM REQUIREMENTS OF 10 CFR 50.60, ACCEPTANCE CRITERIA FOR FRACTURE PREVENTION FOR LIGHT-WATER NUCLEAR POWER REACTORS FOR NORMAL OPERATION - VOGTLE ELECTRIC GENERATING PLANT, UNITS 1 AND 2 (TAC NOS. M90966 AND M90967)

Dear Mr. McCoy:

The Commission has issued the enclosed exemption from the requirements of 10 CFR 50.60, Acceptance Criteria for Fracture Prevention for Light-Water Nuclear Power Reactors for Normal Operation. This exemption permits using the safety margins recommended in the American Society of Mechanical Engineers Code Case N-514, "Low Temperature Overpressure Protection" in lieu of the safety margins required by Appendix G to 10 CFR Part 50.

A copy of the exemption is being forwarded to the Office of 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. 50-424 and 50-425

Enclosure: Exemption

cc w/encl: See next page

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UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

June 5, 1995

Mr. C. K. McCoy
Vice President - Nuclear
Vogtle Project
Georgia Power Company
P. O. Box 1295
Birmingham, AL 35201

SUBJECT: EXEMPTION FROM REQUIREMENTS OF 10 CFR 50.60, ACCEPTANCE CRITERIA FOR FRACTURE PREVENTION FOR LIGHT-WATER NUCLEAR POWER REACTORS FOR NORMAL OPERATION - VOGTLE ELECTRIC GENERATING PLANT, UNITS 1 AND 2 (TAC NOS. M90966 AND M90967)

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A copy of the exemption is being forwarded to the Office of Federal Register for publication.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Herbert N. Berkow".

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

Docket Nos. 50-424 and 50-425

Enclosure: Exemption

cc w/encl: See next page

Mr. C. K. McCoy
Georgia Power Company

Vogtle Electric Generating Plant

cc:

Mr. J. A. Bailey
Manager - Licensing
Georgia Power Company
P. O. Box 1295
Birmingham, Alabama 35201

Harold Reheis, Director
Department of Natural Resources
205 Butler Street, SE. Suite 1252
Atlanta, Georgia 30334

Mr. J. B. Beasley
General Manager, Vogtle Electric
Generating Plant
P. O. Box 1600
Waynesboro, Georgia 30830

Attorney General
Law Department
132 Judicial Building
Atlanta, Georgia 30334

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

Mr. Ernie Toupin
Manager of Nuclear Operations
Oglethorpe Power Corporation
2100 East Exchange Place
Tucker, Georgia 30085-1349

Office of Planning and Budget
Room 615B
270 Washington Street, SW.
Atlanta, Georgia 30334

Charles A. Patrizia, Esquire
Paul, Hastings, Janofsky & Walker
12th Floor
1050 Connecticut Avenue, NW.
Washington, DC 20036

Office of the County Commissioner
Burke County Commission
Waynesboro, Georgia 30830

Arthur H. Domby, Esquire
Troutman Sanders
NationsBank Plaza
600 Peachtree Street, NE.
Suite 5200
Atlanta, Georgia 30308-2216

Mr. J. D. Woodard
Senior Vice President -
Nuclear Operations
Georgia Power Company
P. O. Box 1295
Birmingham, Alabama 35201

Resident Inspector
U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
P. O. Box 572
Waynesboro, Georgia 30830

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

In the Matter of

GEORGIA POWER COMPANY, ET AL.
(Vogtle Electric Generating Plant,
Units 1 and 2)

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Docket Nos. 50-424
and 50-425

EXEMPTION

I.

Georgia Power Company, et al. (the licensee) is the holder of Facility Operating License Nos. NPR-68 and NPF-81, which authorize operation of the Vogtle Electric Generating Plant (VEGP), Units 1 and 2, respectively. The licenses provide, among other things, that the licensee is subject to all rules, regulations, and orders of the Commission now or hereafter in effect.

The facilities consist of two pressurized water reactors, VEGP Units 1 and 2, at the licensee's site located near Waynesboro, Georgia.

II.

Title 10 of the Code of Federal Regulations (10 CFR), Section 50.60, "Acceptance Criteria for Fracture Prevention Measures for Light-Water Nuclear Power Reactors for Normal Operation," states that all light-water nuclear power reactors must meet the fracture toughness and material surveillance program requirements for the reactor coolant pressure boundary as set forth in Appendices G and H to 10 CFR Part 50. Appendix G to 10 CFR 50 defines pressure/temperature (P/T) limits during any condition of normal operation, including anticipated operational occurrences and system hydrostatic tests to which the pressure boundary may be subjected over its service lifetime.

Section 50.60(b) specifies that alternatives to the described requirements in Appendices G and H to 10 CFR Part 50 may be used when an exemption is granted by the Commission under 10 CFR 50.12.

To prevent low temperature overpressure transients that would produce pressure excursions exceeding the Appendix G P/T limits while the reactor is operating at low temperatures, the licensee installed a low temperature overpressure (LTOP) system. The system includes pressure-relieving devices called Power-Operated Relief Valves (PORVs). The PORVs are set at a pressure low enough so that if an LTOP transient occurred, the mitigation system would prevent the pressure in the reactor vessel from exceeding the Appendix G P/T limits. To prevent the PORVs from lifting as a result of normal operating pressure surges (e.g., reactor coolant pump starting, and shifting operating charging pumps) with the reactor coolant system in a water solid condition, the operating pressure must be maintained below the PORV setpoint. In addition, in order to prevent cavitation of a reactor coolant pump, the operator must maintain a differential pressure across the reactor coolant pump seals. Hence, the licensee must operate the plant in a pressure window that is defined as the difference between the minimum required pressure to start a reactor coolant pump and the operating margin to prevent lifting of the PORVs due to normal operating pressure surges. The licensee's proposed LTOP analysis includes changes to account for the non-conservatism identified in Westinghouse Nuclear Safety Advisory Letter 93005A and NRC Information Notice 93-58. The new analysis accounts for the static head due to elevation differences and the dynamic head effect of four reactor coolant pump (RCP) operation. By including these factors and using the Appendix G safety margins, the licensee determined that the operating margin to the PORV

setpoint would be depleted at approximately 120°F for Unit 1 and 145°F for Unit 2. Therefore, operating with these limits could result in the lifting of the PORVs and cavitation of the reactor coolant pumps during normal operation.

The licensee proposed that in determining the design setpoint for LTOP events for Vogtle Units 1 and 2, the allowable pressure be determined using the safety margins developed in an alternate methodology in lieu of the safety margins currently required by Appendix G, 10 CFR Part 50. Designated Code Case N-514, the proposed alternate methodology is consistent with guidelines developed by the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) Working Group on Operating Plant Criteria to define pressure limits during LTOP events that avoid certain unnecessary operational restrictions, provide adequate margins against failure of the reactor pressure vessel, and reduce the potential for unnecessary activation of pressure-relieving devices used for LTOP. Code Case N-514, "Low Temperature Overpressure Protection," has been approved by the ASME Code Committee. The content of this Code case has been incorporated into Appendix G of Section XI of the ASME Code and published in the 1993 Addenda to Section XI. The NRC staff is revising 10 CFR 50.55a, which will endorse the 1993 Addenda and Appendix G of Section XI into the regulations.

An exemption from 10 CFR 50.60 is required to use the alternate methodology for calculating the maximum allowable pressure for the LTOP setpoint. By application dated October 3, 1994, as supplemented March 1, 1995, the licensee requested an exemption from 10 CFR 50.60 for this purpose.

In addition to requesting the exemption from 10 CFR 50.60, the licensee proposed an amendment to the Technical Specifications revising the LTOP analysis. The new analysis removes the non-conservatism as described previously.

III.

Pursuant to 10 CFR 50.12, the Commission may, upon application by any interested person or upon its own initiative, grant exemptions from the requirements of 10 CFR Part 50 when (1) the exemptions are authorized by law, will not present an undue risk to public health or safety, and are consistent with the common defense and security; and (2) when special circumstances are present. Special circumstances are present whenever, according to 10 CFR 50.12(a)(2)(ii), "Application of the regulation in the particular circumstances would not serve the underlying purpose of the rule or is not necessary to achieve the underlying purpose of the rule ..."

The underlying purpose of 10 CFR 50.60 Appendix G is to establish fracture toughness requirements for ferritic materials of pressure-retaining components of the reactor coolant pressure boundary to provide adequate margins of safety during any condition of normal operation, including anticipated operational occurrences, to which the pressure boundary may be subjected over its service lifetime. Section IV.A.2 of this appendix requires that the reactor vessel be operated with P/T limits at least as conservative as those obtained by following the methods of analysis and the required margins of safety of Appendix G of the ASME Code.

Appendix G of the ASME Code requires that the P/T limits be calculated: (a) using a safety factor of 2 on the principal membrane (pressure) stresses, (b) assuming a flaw at the surface with a depth of one-quarter (1/4) of the vessel wall thickness and a length of six (6) times its depth, and (c) using a conservative fracture toughness curve that is based on the lower bound of static, dynamic, and crack arrest fracture toughness tests on material similar to the Vogtle reactor vessel material.

In determining the setpoint for LTOP events, the licensee proposed to use safety margins based on an alternate methodology consistent with the proposed ASME Code Case N-514 guidelines. The ASME Code Case N-514 allows determination of the setpoint for LTOP events such that the maximum pressure in the vessel would not exceed 110% of the P/T limits of the existing ASME Appendix G. This results in a safety factor of 1.8 on the principal membrane stresses. All other factors, including assumed flaw size and fracture toughness, remain the same. Although this methodology would reduce the safety factor on the principal membrane stresses, the proposed criteria will provide adequate margins of safety to the reactor vessel during LTOP transients and will satisfy the underlying purpose of 10 CFR 50.60 for fracture toughness requirements.

Using the licensee's proposed safety factors instead of Appendix G safety factors to calculate the LTOP setpoint will permit a higher LTOP setpoint than would otherwise be required and will provide added margin to prevent normal operating surges from lifting the PORVs or cavitation of the reactor coolant pumps.

IV.

For the foregoing reasons, the NRC staff has concluded that the licensee's proposed use of the alternate methodology in determining the acceptable setpoint for LTOP events will not present an undue risk to public health and safety and is consistent with the common defense and security. The NRC staff has determined that there are special circumstances present, as specified in 10 CFR 50.12(a)(2), such that application of 10 CFR 50.60 is not necessary in order to achieve the underlying purpose of this regulation.

Accordingly, the Commission has determined that, pursuant to 10 CFR 50.12(a), this exemption is authorized by law, will not endanger life or property or common defense and security, and is, otherwise, in the public interest. Therefore, the Commission hereby grants the licensee an exemption from the requirements of 10 CFR 50.60 such that in determining the setpoint for LTOP events, the Appendix G curves for P/T limits are not exceeded by more than 10 percent in order to be in compliance with these regulations. This exemption is applicable only to LTOP conditions during normal operation.

Pursuant to 10 CFR 51.32, the Commission has determined that the granting of this exemption will not result in any significant adverse environmental impact (60 FR 28178).

This exemption is effective upon issuance.

FOR THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION



Steven A. Varga, Director
Division of Reactor Projects - I/II
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Dated at Rockville, Maryland,
this 5th day of June 1995

Accordingly, the Commission has determined that, pursuant to 10 CFR 50.12(a), this exemption is authorized by law, will not endanger life or property or common defense and security, and is, otherwise, in the public interest. Therefore, the Commission hereby grants the licensee an exemption from the requirements of 10 CFR 50.60 such that in determining the setpoint for LTOP events, the Appendix G curves for P/T limits are not exceeded by more than 10 percent in order to be in compliance with these regulations. This exemption is applicable only to LTOP conditions during normal operation.

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Original signed by:

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Division of Reactor Projects - I/II
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

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